

الأئمة الاثنا عشر

Al-A'immat al-Athna 'Ashar

The Twelve Imams

A brief overview over the lives, accomplishments and stories of the Twelve Infallible Shi'i Imams from the

Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them).

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Introduction

In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

The Shia Imamiyyah are known as the Twelver sect, and the reason behind this naming is their belief in twelve Imams from the descendants of Banu Hashim, who were appointed by the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family. This is well-known to everyone, and each Imam has designated the Imam who would succeed him in a manner free from doubt and ambiguity.

It is well established from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, that he mentioned that this Ummah will have twelve successors, similar to the twelve leaders of the Children of Israel. This is also known and simplified in the books of the Shia in a manner that does not allow any doubt. These narrations, along with their specifications, only apply to the Imams of the Shia and the pure progeny. If the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, is considered as the tree, then they are its branches; he is the stem, and they are its twigs; he is the source of knowledge, and they are its bearers; he is the treasure of governance, and they are its keepers; he is the legislator of religion, and they are its preservers; he is the possessor of the Book, and they are its carriers.¹ Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to acknowledge them. Just as they are one of the two weighty things that the Messenger left behind, they serve as a role model for the Ummah and a source of enlightenment throughout time.

With this translation, I hope the lives of the twelve infallible Imams reaches out to even more people, so that they may hear, learn and read about them, and eventually take the decision to follow them and take them as role models and lights of guidance. I ask Allah, the All-Powerful, to raise us with Muhammad and his holy progeny, and make us sincere followers of the Imams after him, specially the current Imam, the Master of the Age and the Awaited

¹ Quoted from what Amin al-Islam al-Tabrisi mentioned in the introduction to his book "I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda," Volume 3. Here, we attempt to present a brief summary of their circumstances and lives, focusing on brevity and conciseness in what we mention, as discussing them in detail would require the writing of a comprehensive encyclopedia. A group of Islamic scholars have undertaken this task and have provided significant information about their lives, biographies, and statements. May Allah reward them with the best reward on behalf of Islam and its people.

Saviour, Al-Hujjah bin Al-Hasan, may Allah hasten his reappearance and give us the opportunity to see his blessed face. Ameen.

وَصَلَّى اللّٰهُ عَلَى سَيِّدِنَا مُحَمَّدٍ وَآلِهِ الْأَطَّهَارِ

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THE FIRST IMAM

Amir al-Mu'mineen Ali Ibn Abi Talib

(peace be upon them both)

Commander of the Faithful

Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib is more famous than what can be described. A multitude of scholars from both the Sunni and Shia sects have authored books and encyclopedias about his life, virtues, merits, struggle, knowledge, speeches, concise sayings, policies, and his wars against the betrayers, transgressors, and rebels. It is preferable for us to suffice with the available information in this field and refer the reader to those encyclopedias. However, here we will mention his qualities mentioned in the Sunnah. We say:

He is the Commander of the Faithful, the Master of Muslims, the Leader of the Guided Ones, the Seal of the Successors, the First in Faith among the people, the most loyal to the covenant of Allah, the greatest in virtue, the most upright in the command of Allah, the most knowledgeable about the religion, the banner of guidance, the beacon of faith, the gate of wisdom, the one touched by the essence of Allah, the successor of the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - the Hashemite, born in the honored Kaaba, and the one who purified it from every idol and pagan statue. He was martyred in the House of God (the Mosque of Kufa) while in prostration during prayer in the year 40 AH.

Each sentence in these sentences, and every phrase in these expressions, is a sacred Prophetic word narrated by the preservers among the Ahl al-Sunnah.²

Imam Ali and the Components of Personality

According to psychologists, the personality of every individual is influenced by three important factors, each of which plays a significant role in shaping their personality and has a profound impact on their development.

The human personality of each individual is likened to a triangle composed of the interconnection of these three sides, and these three factors are as follows:

- 1) Heredity.
- 2) Education and culture.
- 3) Environment and surroundings.

² Refer to Musnad Ahmad 1/331, 5/182-189, Hilyat al-Awliya 1/62-68, and observe Al-Ghadir 2/33.

All the qualities, whether good or bad, noble or base, that a person possesses are transmitted to them through these three channels and grow within them through these pathways.

Children do not inherit only money, wealth, and physical characteristics such as facial features, eye color, and body traits from their parents. They also inherit all the spiritual qualities and moral traits that their parents possess through heredity.

In reality, parents, through the partial fusion of the sperm and egg, transmit their summarized traits to the first cell composed of those two components, namely the embryonic cell, which grows along with the inherited qualities and characteristics it carries.

The influence of culture and surroundings constitutes the other two sides of the triangle of human personality. Both of these factors have a significant and profound impact on the development of the inherent noble qualities deposited within every individual either due to natural inclination or inherited from the parents.

Indeed, every teacher has the ability to shape the destiny and future of a child through the instructions, recommendations, personal conduct, opinions, and ideas they impart. Many environments have turned good individuals into corrupt ones, or corrupt ones into righteous ones.

The impact of these two important factors is evident and requires no further explanation or clarification. However, we must not forget the role of the individual's will behind these three factors.

The inherited aspect of his personality

Imam Ali - peace be upon him - was not an exception to this rule as a human being.

The Imam inherited a significant part of his psychological, spiritual, and moral character from these factors and three ways. Here is a detailed explanation:

The inheritance from the parents

Imam Ali descended from a noble and esteemed father, Abu Talib. Abu Talib was a leader in Mecca, the master of Bani Hashim, and held a prominent position. Additionally, he was

known for his tolerance, generosity, kindness, compassion, love, sacrifice, and selflessness in the pursuit of the sacred goal and the blessed monotheistic belief.

He's the one who took care of the Messenger of Allah when his grandfather and first guardian, Abdul-Muttalib, passed away while he was only eight years old. Abu Talib then assumed responsibility for him, took care of his affairs, protected and guarded him during travel and at home, with unparalleled sincerity, enthusiasm, and diligence. Moreover, he continued to defend the message of monotheism and the true religion brought by the noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and exerted every effort and sacrifice to establish its principles and spread its teachings, enduring all the hardships and toils required to achieve these lofty goals.

This reality and his steadfast position were reflected in many of his poems and verses, compiled in his diwan, such as his saying:

*So that people may know that Muhammad
is a prophet like Moses and Jesus son of Mary.
Have you not realized that we found Muhammad
as a messenger, like Moses, inscribed in the former scriptures?*³

It is impossible to produce sacrifices like these, the most prominent of which was the siege of Banu Hashim as a whole by the people and their harsh boycott, driven by nothing but deep faith in the goal and great passion for the spiritual cause, which Abu Talib was characterized by. Merely tribal affiliations and blood ties cannot create such a sacrificial spirit in a person.

The evidence of Abu Talib's belief in the religion of his nephew is abundant and plentiful, attracting the attention of all fair and impartial investigators. However, some extremists stopped at the belief of this selfless character in the call of Muhammad, while another group went beyond that, claiming that he died as a nonbeliever.

Even if these ten solid pieces of evidence of Abu Talib's unwavering faith, found in historical and hadith books, were true for any other man, no one would doubt his faith, let alone

³ Majma' al-Bayan 4/37.

his Islam. But why can't all this evidence convince this group and shed light on the truth for them?!

This is regarding the father of Imam Amir al-Mu'minin - peace be upon him.

As for his mother, she is Fatima bint Asad ibn Hashim, who was a believer and a follower of the Prophet of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, even before Islam. She used to follow the religion of Ibrahim.

She is the pure woman who sought refuge in the Masjid al-Haram during labor and clung to the wall of the Kaaba, saying:

"O Lord, I believe in You and in what came from You in terms of messengers and scriptures. I believe in the words of my grandfather Ibrahim, who built this ancient House. By the right of the one who built this House and (by the right) of the unborn child in my womb, I ask for ease in my delivery."⁴

So Fatima bint Asad entered the Kaaba and gave birth to Ali there.

And that virtue has been transmitted by the majority of Shiite historians and scholars, as well as the scholars of genealogy in their compilations. It has also been conveyed by a large group of Sunni scholars who acknowledged it in their books, considering it a unique incident and a great event that has no parallel.⁵

And Al-Hakim al-Nisaburi said: It has been reported that Fatima bint Asad gave birth to the Commander of the Faithful, Ali ibn Abi Talib, may Allah honor his face, inside the Kaaba.⁶

Shihab al-Din Abu al-Thana' al-Sayyid Mahmoud al-Alousi said: "The fact that Amir [al-Mumineen], may Allah bless his face, was born in the House is a well-known matter in the world, and no one other than him, may Allah bless his face, became famous for such a situation as he did."⁷

⁴ Kashf al-Ghamma 1/60.

⁵ Marwaj al-Dhahab" 2/349, "Sharh al-Shifa" by Al-Qadi 'Iyad 1/151, and others. The scholar Al-Ardoobadi dedicated a treatise to this virtue and named it "Ali, the one born in the Kaaba.

⁶ Sharh Ainiyya Abdul Baqi Afandi al-Umari 15.

⁷ Al-Ghadir 6/22.

Education in the Chamber of the Prophet

As for spiritual, intellectual, and moral education, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, received it in the chamber of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family. It is the second aspect of his three-fold character.

If we divide the lifespan of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, into five parts, we find that the first part of these five sections consists of the years he spent before the mission of the Noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family.

This part of his noble life does not exceed ten years because when Ali, peace be upon him, was born, the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, had not yet reached the age of thirty. It is known that he, peace be upon him and his family, was entrusted with the message at the age of forty.

Based on this, Imam Ali, peace be upon him, had not yet reached the age of ten when the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, was entrusted with the message and appointed as the Prophet.

One of the most significant events in the life of Imam Ali, peace be upon him, is the formation of his noble personality and the realization of the second aspect of the triangle we mentioned through the teachings of the Noble Prophet and what he, peace be upon him and his family, instilled in Ali, peace be upon him, in terms of morals and ideas. This period in the life of every individual is critical and highly valuable because a child's personality during this period is like a pure white page that can accept any color and is ready to be imprinted with any image, regardless of its nature. Therefore, this period of life is considered the best opportunity for educators and teachers to develop within it, as much as the Creator has placed in the child's being, good qualities, noble characteristics, and moral virtues. They guide the child, through education, towards ethical values, human principles, and a happy way of life. To achieve this noble goal, the Noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, personally took charge of the upbringing of Ali, peace be upon him, after his birth. This was when Fatima bint Asad brought her child Ali, peace be upon him, to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, and she was met with intense affection from the Messenger of Allah towards Ali. He even said to

her, "Place his cradle near my bed." The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, used to purify Ali at the time of his ablution, and he would chew food for him before giving it to him. He would move Ali's cradle when he slept and speak to him while he was awake. He would observe him and say, "This is my brother, my successor, my supporter, my executor, my treasure, my refuge, my sanctuary, my son-in-law, my trustee, the husband of my beloved daughter, and the guardian entrusted with my will and my caliphate."⁸

The purpose of this care was indeed to provide the second aspect of personal development (which is education) through the Prophet Muhammad, may peace and blessings be upon him and his family, and that no one other than the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) had any influence in shaping the noble character.

Imam Ali (may peace be upon him) mentioned what the noble Messenger bestowed upon him and what he did for him during that period. He said:

"You are aware of my position with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) in terms of close kinship and special status. He placed me in his lap while I was a child, pressed me against his chest, covered me with his blanket, let me touch his body, he kissed my forehead, and he would chew something and then feed me with it."⁹

The Prophet takes Ali to his house

When Allah, the Most High, willed that His chosen successor be raised in a righteous manner, He caused the Prophet to take Ali to his house, and from his early childhood, he was placed under the care of the noblest Prophet, peace be upon him and his family. His Prophet's attention was drawn to this matter.

Historians have mentioned that Mecca experienced a severe crisis during that year, and it was a year of hardship and exhaustion. Abu Talib, may Allah be pleased with him, had limited wealth and many children, so he suffered from the same destitution and distress that the Quraysh faced. At that time, the Messenger of Allah called upon his uncle Abbas to take responsibility for one of Abu Talib's sons, and Abbas, who was wealthy and affluent, agreed to this proposal.

⁸ Kashf al-Ghamma 1/60.

⁹ Nahj al-Balagha - Sharh Abduh - 2/182, Al-Khutbah al-Qasi'ah.

Thus, the Prophet took Ali, and Abbas took charge of Ja'far and attended to his affairs.¹⁰

And so, once again, Ali - peace be upon him - became completely immersed in the company of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family. With this complete companionship, he was able to extract abundant fruits from his lofty morals and noble qualities. Under the protection, care, guidance, and leadership of the Prophet, he reached the highest peak of spiritual perfection.

This is Imam Amir al-Mu'minin - peace be upon him - referring to those valuable days and the continuous blessed prophetic care, as he says:

"I used to follow him, following his every step, learning from his ethics every day. He commanded me to emulate him."¹¹

Ali in the cave of Hira

The Prophet - even before he was appointed as a messenger and a prophet - used to seclude himself and worship in the cave of Hira for a month every year. When the month was over and he completed his stay in Hira, he descended from the mountain and headed to the Sacred Mosque, leading with his head and performed Tawaf around the Kaaba seven times, then he returned to his home. Here arises a question: What was Ali's role - may peace be upon him - during those days when the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, used to worship and seclude himself in that place, given what we know about the Prophet's immense love for him? Did the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, take Ali with him to that remarkable place, or did he leave him and separate from him?

Many indications suggest that since the Prophet took Ali, he never separated from him even for a day. Historians say:

"Ali always accompanied the Prophet and never left him. Even when the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, went to the desert or the mountains, he would take Ali with him."¹²

¹⁰ Bihar al-Anwar 35/44, and Sirah Ibn Hisham 1/246.

¹¹ Nahjul Balagha - Sharh Abduh - Volume 2, page 182.

¹² Ibn Abi Al-Hadid: Sharh Nahjul Balagha, 13/208.

Ibn Abi Al-Hadid says:

Ali (peace be upon him) mentioned this matter in the al-Qasi'a sermon when he said:

"And indeed, he used to accompany me to Hira every year, and I would see him while no one else except me could see him."¹³

This statement, although it is possible to accompany the Prophet in Hira after the noble mission, the previous indications and the fact that being in proximity to the Prophet in Hira mostly occurred before the mission, support that this sentence could be a reference to Ali's companionship with the Prophet in Hira before the mission.

The purity of the higher soul and the clarity of the spirit that Ali, peace be upon him, possessed, along with the continuous upbringing he received in the presence of the Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings be upon him and his family, all of that was the reason for Ali, peace be upon him, to be characterized from an early age by keen insight, an enlightened heart, attentive ears, and awareness that enabled him to see things and hear waves that are hidden from ordinary people and are difficult for them to perceive. His soul exclaims as he says, "I see the light of revelation and prophecy, and I smell the scent of prophethood."¹⁴

And Imam Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him) says:

Ali (peace be upon him) used to see light and hear voices along with the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) before the Message. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said to him, "If I were not the Seal of the Prophets, you would have been a partner in prophethood. However, if you are not a prophet, then you are the successor of the Prophet and his inheritor. Indeed, you are the master of successors and the leader of the righteous."¹⁵

And Imam Ali (peace be upon him) says: I heard the sad cry of Satan when the revelation descended upon him, peace and blessings be upon him and his progeny. So I said, "O Messenger of Allah, what is this sad cry?" He replied, "This is Satan despairing from his worship." Then he

¹³ Source: Nahj al-Balagha, al-Qasi'a Sermon 187.

¹⁴ Source: Nahj al-Balagha, al-Qasi'a Sermon 187.

¹⁵ Ibn Abi Al-Hadid: Sharh Nahj al-Balagha 13/310.

said to him, "You hear what I hear and see what I see, except that you are not a prophet, but you are a minister."¹⁶

The Prophetic Environment and the Personality of Imam Ali

If we add to the two factors mentioned (meaning what he inherited from his pure parents, and what he gained in the presence of the Prophet) what he acquired from the environment of the message and Islam in terms of noble ideas and opinions, and the influence he received from them, we would realize the greatness of the exalted personality from this aspect.

Hence, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) enjoys a prestigious position among everyone: Muslims and non-Muslims alike, due to the sublime personality he possessed and the distinctive qualities he was characterized by.

This is what led both the distant and the close to describe Ali in a way that no one else among humans has been described, and to attribute him with qualities that no one else was granted. Dr. Shibli Shumayyil, who passed away in 1335 and was one of the prominent scholars of the present century, said:

"Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib is among the greatest of the greats, a unique figure that the East and the West have not witnessed a similar image of, whether in the past or the present."¹⁷

And Umar ibn al-Khattab said:

"Women have become barren, unable to give birth to someone like Ali ibn Abi Talib."¹⁸

And George Jordac, the well-known Lebanese Christian writer, says:

"And what is with you, O world, if you gathered your forces and bestowed upon Ali in every era his intellect, his heart, his tongue, and his Dhul Fiqr."¹⁹

¹⁶ Source: Nahjul Balagha, Sermon 187. This is the second tributary that nourished the character of the Alawite personality with noble virtues and qualities.

¹⁷ "Imam Ali: The Voice of Human Justice" - Volume 1, page 37.

¹⁸ "Al-Ghadir" - Volume 6, page 38, Najaf edition.

¹⁹ Imam Ali, the Voice of Human Justice, 1/49.

These dimensions that we have alluded to are the natural dimensions of the supreme personality.

The fourth dimension of the Imam's personality

However, the dimensions of Imam Ali's personality - peace be upon him - are not confined to these three dimensions. The saints of Allah have a fourth dimension, integrated within their identity and the truth of their personality. This dimension distinguishes them from all other individuals, giving them a special brilliance and great radiance.

And this dimension is the spiritual dimension that sets this elite group apart from others, making them an excellent select few among the people. It is because they are the messengers and prophets of God, or His caliphs and successors to the prophets.

We see that Allah commands His messenger to describe himself by saying: ***"Say: Exalted is my Lord! Was I ever but a mortal messenger?" [17:93]***

The word "mortal" indicates the human dimensions present in every natural person, although they differ in their degree of perfection and radiance. And the word "messenger" points to that spiritual dimension that distinguished him, peace be upon him and his family, from the people and made him a teacher and a role model for humanity.

Therefore, when defining divine personalities, one must consider a composite personality with two dimensions: the natural and the divine. Only Allah, may He be glorified, can describe them as He did, such as His words regarding the noblest Messenger, peace be upon him and his family: ***"Those who follow the Messenger, the unlettered prophet, whom they find written [i.e., described] in what they have of the Torah and the Gospel, who enjoins upon them what is right and prohibits them from what is wrong and makes lawful for them what is good and forbids them from what is evil and relieves them of their burden¹ and the shackles which were upon them." [7:157].*** And verses were revealed and narrations were mentioned regarding the rights of Imam Amir al-Mu'minin - peace be upon him.

How, when the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: The title of the book of Al-Mu'min is the love of Ali ibn Abi Talib, peace be upon him.²⁰

And he (peace be upon him and his progeny) said: "Whoever desires to live my life and die my death, and reside in the Garden of Eden that my Lord has planted, should befriend Ali after me, and befriend his successor, and follow the Imams after me. For they are my progeny, created from my essence, endowed with knowledge and understanding. Woe unto those who deny their virtues among my nation, those who sever their ties with them. May Allah not grant them my intercession."²¹

And Imam Ahmad bin Hanbal said: "No one among the Companions has virtues with authentic chains of narrators like Ali - may Allah be pleased with him."²²

Imam Al-Fakhr Al-Razi said: "Whoever takes Ali as the leader of his religion has indeed held firmly to the trustworthy rope in his religion and himself."²³

He also said: "Whoever follows Ali ibn Abi Talib in his religion has been guided by the saying of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family: "O Allah, turn the truth with Ali wherever he turns."²⁴

Highlighting his noble personality, there is no doubt about the greatness of Ali ibn Abi Talib, if one stops to define a noble and virtuous character endowed by Allah with talents and virtues. Sufficient in this regard is what Tariq ibn Shahab narrated. He said, "I was with Abdullah ibn Abbas when some people from the Muhajireen (early Muslim emigrants) came to him and asked, 'O Ibn Abbas, what kind of man was Ali ibn Abi Talib?' He replied, 'His heart was filled with wisdom, knowledge, strength, assistance, and close kinship to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family.'"²⁵

Ikrima narrated from Ibn Abbas, who said: 'Nothing was revealed in the Qur'an starting with the phrase 'O you who believe' except that Ali - may peace be upon him - was its leader and

²⁰ It was narrated by Al-Hafiz Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi in his Tarikh, 4/410.

²¹ Narrated by Al-Hafiz Abu Nu'aim in "Hilyatul Awliya" 1/86.

²² "Manaqib Ahmad" by Ibn al-Jawzi al-Hanbali, 163.

²³ Tafsir Mafatih al-Ghayb 1/205

²⁴ Same source, p. 204.

²⁵ Shawahid al-Tanzil 1/108, Hadith 153.

commander. Allah has reprimanded the companions of Muhammad in places other than this, and Ali was only mentioned in goodness.²⁶

Sa'id ibn Jubayr narrated from Ibn Abbas, who said: 'Nothing was revealed in any of the books of Allah that was not revealed about Ali'.²⁷

Ibn Abbas said: 'More than three hundred verses were revealed in praise of Ali'.²⁸

And we will suffice with two sayings describing Ali - may peace be upon him - from his two students who were with him publicly and privately:

1. Ibn Abbas said when he was asked about Ali: 'May the mercy of Allah be upon Abu al-Hasan. By Allah, he was the knowledge of guidance, the cave of piety, the pole of prohibition, the place of argumentation, the dew of heavenly rain, and the ultimate limit of knowledge for mankind. He was a light that shone in the darkness, a caller to the great pilgrimage, and one who firmly grasped the firmest bond. He was more cautious than anyone who pretended and deviated. He was more honorable than anyone who witnessed the secret after Muhammad al-Mustafa. He was the companion of the two qiblas, the father of the two grandsons, and his wife was the best of women, incomparable to anyone else. My eyes have never seen anyone like him, nor have I heard of anyone like him. So, may the curse of Allah and the curse of the servants be upon those who hate him until the Day of Calling'.²⁹
2. When Muawiyah asked Dhirar ibn Hamza about Ali after his death, he said, 'Describe Ali to me.' Dhirar replied, 'Will you pardon me?' Muawiyah said, 'Describe him.' Dhirar repeated, 'Will you pardon me?' Muawiyah said, 'No, I will not pardon you.' Dhirar then said, 'Since there is no escape, I will tell you what I know about him. By Allah, he was far-sighted and strong, delivering eloquent speeches and ruling with justice. Knowledge would burst forth from him, and wisdom would speak from various aspects. He would shun the worldly life and its pleasures, finding solace in the night and its darkness. By Allah, he shed tears abundantly and was deep in thought. He would turn his palms and

²⁶ Musnad Ahmad 1/190, Tarikh al-Khulafa 171.

²⁷ Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah, Chapter 9, Section 3, 76.

²⁸ Tarikh al-Khulafa 172.

²⁹ Mizan al-I'tidal 1/484.

address himself. He admired coarse clothing and simple food. By Allah, he was like one of us. He would respond when we asked him, initiate conversation when we approached him, and come to us when we called him. By Allah, even when he approached us and was close to us, we did not speak to him out of awe, nor did we initiate a conversation with him out of magnificence. If he smiled, it was like a string of pearls. He respected people of religion and loved the poor. The mighty did not hope for falsehood from him, nor did the weak despair of his justice. So I bear witness by Allah that I have seen him in certain situations where the night extended its darkness, its stars shining, where he stood in his prayer chamber, holding onto his beard, trembling like a healthy person and weeping like a sad one. It was as if I heard him saying, 'O worldly life, to me it is that you presented yourself? Or have you made me yearn for something? No, no, go and deceive others! I have seen you clearly, and there is no return for me to you. Your lifespan is short, your livelihood is insignificant, and your danger is great. Alas for the lack of provisions, the distance of the journey, and the loneliness of the road.' Muawiyah shed tears on his beard, and he tried to wipe them away with his palm while the people were overwhelmed with weeping. Muawiyah said, 'May Allah have mercy on Abu al-Hasan (referring to Ali). By Allah, he was indeed like that. So how is your grief for him, O Dhirar?' Dhirar replied, 'It is the grief of a mother whose child has been slaughtered in her lap. Her tears cannot be dried, nor can her sadness be relieved.'³⁰

These are glimpses of his virtues and sparks of his numerous merits that history has preserved from any manipulation of hands. However, Ali knows no one but his Creator, and after him comes the owner of the greatest message, his cousin, the chosen one (may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family).

Designation of Ali for the Imamate

There is no doubt that Islam is a universal religion and the final divine law. The leadership of the Islamic nation was under the authority of the noble Prophet - peace be upon him and his progeny - as long as he was alive. Naturally, it is necessary to entrust the position of leadership to the best individuals of the nation, the most perfect among them.

³⁰ Ibn Abi al-Hadid's explanation of Nahj al-Balagha, specifically volume 18, page 225, and others.

In this matter, the question arises: Is the position of leadership after the Prophet - peace be upon him and his progeny - a designated appointment or an elective position? There are two viewpoints: The Shia believe that the position of leadership is a designated appointment and must be specified by divine decree, while the Sunnis believe that this position is elective and democratic, meaning that the nation should choose one of its members to govern the country.

Both of these mentioned viewpoints have evidence, as their adherents have mentioned in their theological books. However, what can be discussed here is the evaluation and study of this issue in light of examining and assessing the prevailing conditions during the time of the Prophet's mission. This study is sufficient to prove the validity of one of the two viewpoints. Evaluating the political conditions within the Islamic region and beyond during the time of the Prophet's mission dictates that the successor of the Prophet - peace be upon him and his progeny - must be appointed by Allah Almighty and should not be left to the nation. The Islamic society was constantly threatened by the triple danger of the Romans, the Persians, and the hypocrites, who sought to launch a massive attack and sow seeds of corruption and discord among Muslims.

Furthermore, the interests of the nation required the unification of the Muslim ranks in the face of external threats. This could be achieved by appointing a political leader after the Prophet's demise, thereby closing the door to enemy influence within the Islamic nation and preventing their control over its destiny. Here is an explanation and clarification of this issue:

The Roman Empire was one of the dangerous elements surrounding the Islamic entity and threatening it from both within and outside. This formidable power was stationed in the northern part of the Arabian Peninsula and constantly occupied the thoughts of the Prophet - peace be upon him and his progeny - as long as he lived until the moment of his passing and joining the highest station [in Paradise].

The first military confrontation between the Muslims and the Roman Christian army took place in the eighth year of the Hijrah in the land of Palestine. This encounter led to the martyrdom of three prominent military leaders: Ja'far At-Tayyar, Zayd ibn Harithah, and Abdullah ibn Harithah. The withdrawal of the Islamic army after the martyrdom of the mentioned leaders increased the audacity of the Roman Caesar's army, and there was an increasing fear that the capital of Islam would be subjected to a massive attack by this army.

Therefore, in the ninth year of the Hijrah, the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his progeny - led a very large army to the borders of Greater Syria to personally lead any military confrontation. The army was able, during this difficult and arduous journey, to regain its lost prestige and revive its political life. However, this limited victory did not satisfy the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his progeny. Shortly before falling ill, he prepared a large army of Muslims and appointed Usama ibn Zaid as its leader, instructing them to proceed to the borders of Greater Syria and participate in that front.

The second side of the dangerous triangle threatening the Islamic entity was the Persian Empire. This empire was extremely angered by the Prophet - peace be upon him and his progeny - and opposed his message to the extent that the Persian Emperor Khosrow Parviz tore apart the Prophet's letter and insulted his messenger by expelling him from his court. Khosrow also wrote to his governor and agent in Yemen, instructing him to send someone to capture or kill the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his progeny - if he refused to surrender.

Although Khosrow himself was assassinated during the time of the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his progeny, the independence of Yemen, which had long been under the colonization of the Persian Empire, did not escape the notice of the Iranian kings at that time. Their arrogance, tyranny, and pride did not allow them to tolerate competition from the new power (the Islamic power).

The third danger was the danger of the hypocrites, who worked within the ranks of the Muslims like the fifth column to undermine the foundations of the Islamic entity from within. They even intended to assassinate the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his progeny - on his way back from Tabuk to Medina. Some members of this dangerous party believed that the Islamic movement would come to an end with the death and departure of the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his progeny - and thus everyone would find relief.³¹

Abu Sufyan ibn Harb indeed plotted a cursed scheme after the death of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, to strike a blow to the Islamic Ummah from within. This happened when he approached Ali (peace be upon him) and offered him allegiance against

³¹ "At-Tour," page 30.

those whom the people of Saqifah had appointed, aiming to divide the unified Islamic Ummah into two warring factions, so that he could prey on the chaos.

However, Imam Ali (peace be upon him) with his great intelligence perceived the malicious intentions of Abu Sufyan and rejected his demand. He exposed his motives and evil intentions by saying: "By Allah, you intended nothing but discord, and by Allah, you have always sought harm for Islam. We have no need for your advice."³²

And the destructive role of the hypocrites has reached such an intensity that the Qur'an mentioned them in many chapters, which are: Surah Al Imran, An-Nisa, Al-Ma'idah, Al-Anfal, At-Tawbah, Al-Ankabut, Al-Ahzab, Muhammad, Al-Fath, Al-Mujadila, Al-Hadid, Al-Munafiqun, and Al-Hashr.

With the existence of such fierce and powerful enemies who were plotting against Islam, seeking opportunities to eliminate it, is it right for the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, to leave his new Muslim community without appointing a religious and political leader for them? Social considerations say that it was the duty of the Messenger of Islam to prevent any differences or divisions within the community after him and to ensure the continuity and unity of the Muslim ummah by establishing a strong fortress and defensive barrier around that community. Protecting and safeguarding the ummah from disastrous events and preventing each group from claiming leadership for itself, and thus avoiding conflicts over the issue of caliphate and leadership, could only be achieved by appointing a leader for the ummah and not leaving matters to chance.

This social consideration leads us to the validity of the theory of designating a leader after the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family. It seems that from the early days of the Islamic message, the Prophet of Islam raised the issue of caliphate, and he continued to address and remind people of it throughout his life until the very end. He appointed his successor and clearly stated it in the beginning of his call and also at its end. Here is an explanation of these two positions:

³² Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, vol. 2, p. 222; Al-'Iqd al-Fareed, vol. 2, p. 249.

Prophethood and Imamate are inseparable

Regardless of the logical and philosophical evidence that definitively proves the validity of the first opinion, there are reports and narrations mentioned in reputable sources that confirm the validity of the position held by the Shia scholars and endorsed by them. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, clearly stated his successor during the prophetic period on several occasions, removing the issue of Imamate from popular elections and public opinion.

He did not appoint (or mention) his successor and vicegerent only towards the end of his life, but he took the initiative to introduce his successor and vicegerent at the beginning of his mission, when only a few dozen people had gathered under the banner of his message. This was the day when Allah Almighty commanded him to warn his closest relatives of the painful divine punishment and to invite them to the belief in monotheism before declaring his message to everyone and starting his general call to all people.

He gathered forty men from the leaders of Banu Hashim and Banu Muttalib, then stood before them as a speaker and asked, "Who among you will support me in this matter and be my brother, successor, and vicegerent among you?" The people remained silent, and then Ali (peace be upon him) stood up and declared his support and endorsement. The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, took hold of his neck and turned to those present, saying, "This is my brother, my successor, and my vicegerent among you."³³

This hadith is known among interpreters and hadith scholars as Hadith Yawm al-Daar and Hadith Bada' al-Da'wah.

However, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, did not limit himself to mentioning his successor at the beginning of his mission. Rather, he explicitly stated it on various occasions, whether during travel or while being present, to the caliphate of Ali - may peace be upon him - after him. However, none of those occasions reached the significance, clarity, explicitness, and decisiveness of what was conveyed in the Hadith of Ghadir.

³³ Tarikh al-Tabari, Vol. 2, p. 216; Al-Kamil fi al-Tarikh, Vol. 2, pp. 62-63.

The story of Ghadir

When the rituals of Hajj were completed, and the Muslims learned the rituals of Hajj from the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, decided to leave Mecca and return to Medina. He issued an order to that effect. When the great procession of pilgrims reached the area of Rabigh³⁴, which is three miles away from Juhfah³⁵, the custodian of revelation, Gabriel, descended upon the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, in an area called Ghadir Khumm and addressed him with the following verse: ***"O Messenger, proclaim what has been revealed to you from your Lord, and if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people."*** [5:67]

The apparent meaning of the verse reveals that Allah Almighty entrusted the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, with the responsibility of carrying out a dangerous mission. What could be more dangerous than appointing Ali, peace be upon him, to the position of caliphate after him, in the presence and hearing of a hundred thousand witnesses?!

From here, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, issued his order to halt, and the vanguard of that great procession stopped, and those who were delayed joined them. It was midday, and the weather was extremely hot. People would place a portion of their cloaks over their heads and the other part under their feet for shade. A canopy made of a cloak was prepared for the Prophet (peace be upon him and his family). It was thrown over the branches of a Samurah tree. The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) then led the Dhuhr prayer in congregation. While the people surrounded him, he ascended a pulpit made from the saddles and bags of camels and delivered a sermon, raising his voice, saying:

"Praise be to Allah. We seek His help and believe in Him. We rely on Him. We seek refuge in Him from the evils within ourselves and the consequences of our bad deeds. Whoever Allah guides, no one can lead astray, and whoever he leads astray, no one can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allah, and I bear witness that Muhammad is His servant and

³⁴ Rabigh is now located on the road between Mecca and Medina.

³⁵ It is one of the stations of the state of ihram, and roads branch out from it towards the cities of Madinah, Egypt, and Iraq.

messenger. Now then, O people, I am about to be called away, and I shall respond. I am accountable, and you are accountable. So, what do you say?"

They said: "We bear witness that you have conveyed the message, advised, and made efforts. May Allah reward you with goodness." The Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) said: "Do you not testify that there is no deity worthy of worship except Allah, and that Muhammad is His servant and messenger, and that his Paradise is true, and that the Hour will undoubtedly come, and that Allah will resurrect those in the graves?" They said: "Yes, we testify to that." The Prophet (peace be upon him) said: "O Allah, bear witness." Then he said: "I am leaving behind two weighty things among you, if you follow them you will never go astray"

A caller shouted, "May my father and mother be sacrificed for you, O Messenger of Allah, what are the two weighty things?" He, peace be upon him and his family, said: "The Book of Allah is a medium whose one end is in the hand of Allah and the other end in your hands, so hold onto it firmly. The other is my progeny, and indeed the All-Knowing, the Subtle, has informed me that these two will not separate from each other until they reach me at the Pool (of Kawthar). Do not surpass them, for you will be destroyed, and do not fall short of them, for you will be destroyed."

At this point, he took the hand of Ali - peace be upon him - and raised it until the whiteness of their armpits was visible, and all the people recognized him. Then he said: "O people, who has more authority over the believers than themselves?" They said: "Allah and His Messenger know best." He, peace be upon him and his family, said: "Indeed, Allah is my Master and I am the Master of the believers, and I have more authority over them than themselves. So, whoever I am his master, then Ali is his master."³⁶ O Allah, befriend those who befriend Him, and oppose those who oppose Him, and support those who support Him, and forsake those who forsake Him, and love those who love Him, and hate those who hate Him, and turn the truth to his side wherever he turns.³⁷

³⁶ The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, repeated this statement three times to avoid any confusion or misunderstanding.

³⁷ Refer to the sources of this recurring Hadith in Al-Ghadir Encyclopedia by Al-Allamah Al-Amini - may Allah have mercy on him.

When he descended from the pulpit, Hasan ibn Thabit, the poet of the era of the message, sought permission to express in poetry what had been revealed to him. The Messenger granted him permission, and he stood up and recited:

"On the Day of Ghadir, their Prophet called to them,

With the noblest of words, invoking their attention.

He asked, "Who is your master and guardian?"

They replied, without hesitation or doubt,

"Your God is our Master, and you are our Guardian,

From among us, none disobey your command."

Then he said, "Rise, O Ali, for indeed,

I am pleased with you as my successor and guide.

Whoever considers me as their master,

This one is their master too, so be his loyal supporters."

There, he supplicated, "O Allah! Love the one who loves Ali,

And be an enemy to the one who is an enemy to him."

Sources of the incident:

This is the incident of Ghadir, which we have presented to you in general terms. It is an incident that cannot be denied or doubted by anyone, even in the least. It has been mentioned by historians such as Al-Baladhuri, Ibn Qutaybah, At-Tabari, Al-Khatib Al-Baghdadi, Ibn Abdul Barr, Ibn Asakir, Yaqut Al-Hamawi, Ibn Athir, Ibn Abi Al-Hadid, Ibn Khallikan, Al-Yafi'i, Ibn Kathir, Ibn Khaldun, Adh-Dhahabi, Ibn Hajar Al-Asqalani, Ibn As-Sabbagh Al-Maliki, Al-Maqrizi, Jalaluddin As-Suyuti, Nuruddin Al-Halabi, and many other historians who have dedicated themselves to this subject throughout the centuries and generations.

It has also been mentioned by scholars of hadith such as Imam Ash-Shafi'i, Ahmad ibn Hanbal, Ibn Majah, At-Tirmidhi, An-Nasa'i, Abu Ya'la Al-Mawsili, Al-Baghawi, At-Tahawi, Al-Hakim An-Nisaburi, Ibn Al-Maghazili, Al-Khwarizmi, Mahbub Al-Din At-Tabari, Al-Hamawaini, Al-Haythami, Al-Jazari, Al-Qastallani, Al-Muttaqi Al-Hindi, Tajuddin Al-Manawi, Abu Abdullah Al-Zarqani, and Ibn Hamza Al-Dimashqi, among other prominent scholars of hadith.

It has also been discussed by prominent exegetes such as At-Tabari, Ath-Tha'labi, Al-Wahidi in "Asbab Al-Nuzul," Al-Qurtubi, Abu As-Saud, Al-Fakhr Ar-Razi, Ibn Kathir Ash-Shami, An-Nisaburi, Jalaluddin As-Suyuti, Al-Alusi, and Al-Baghdadi.

It has been mentioned by numerous theologians at the end of their discussions on Imamate, although they may have debated its interpretation and arguments, such as Al-Qadi Abu Bakr Al-Baqillani in his introduction, Judge Abdul Rahman Al-Iji in his positions, Sayyid Sharif Al-Jurjani in his explanation, Shamsuddin As-Suhrawardi in his "Matla An-Nur," Taftazani in his "Sharh Al-Maqasid," Al-Qushji in his "Sharh At-Tajrid," and others who have discussed and debated the hadith of Ghadir and its implications.

The Incident of Ghadeer and the Symbol of Eternity

The Almighty intended for the incident of Ghadir to remain a gentle breeze flowing through generations, preserving its pure and radiant truth that transcends generations, the passage of time, and the changing years. This can be attributed to three factors:

1. The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, proclaimed it in a large gathering of tens of thousands of people, upon his return from the Farewell Pilgrimage. He raised the call and made the announcement, surrounded by a multitude of companions and notable figures of the Ummah. He commanded the delivery of the testimony to those absent, so that everyone would be aware and informed of what had been conveyed.

2. On that occasion, Allah, glorified be He, revealed verses that draw the reader's attention to the incident. Here are the verses:

- ***'And convey what has been revealed to you from your Lord, for if you do not, then you have not conveyed His message. And Allah will protect you from the people.'* [5:67]** It has been mentioned in the incident of Ghadir by a large number of interpreters, exceeding thirty in count. The knowledgeable researcher, Al-Amini, mentioned in his book *Al-Ghadir* the texts and expressions of these individuals. Whoever wishes to refer to them should consult his book.
 - ***'This day I have perfected for you your religion and completed My favor upon you and have approved for you Islam as religion.'* [5:3]** The descent of this verse has been transmitted by a group, numbering more than sixteen.
 - ***'A questioner asked about a punishment to befall * upon the disbelievers, with no one to repel it * from Allah, Lord of the Ascending Stairways' [70:1-3]*** The descent of this verse has also been mentioned by a group of interpreters, numbering more than thirty. Additionally, the Shia unanimously agree on the descent of these three verses regarding this incident.³⁸
3. Since its revelation from the source of revelation, the hadith (narration) has been met with poets and literary figures vying to compose poetry and verses about it. These compositions have extended from the time of the emergence of that text during that occasion until our present time, in different languages and cultures. The knowledgeable researcher, Al-Amini, was able to investigate and gather all that has been composed in the Arabic language about that event. It is hoped that all researchers, regardless of their tongues and languages, will strive to gather what has been composed and recited in their own literature.

In conclusion: Rarely do we find a historical event that has had such significance in the general human world, and in Islamic history and the Islamic nation in particular, as the incident of Ghadir. It has rarely attracted the attention of various groups such as historians, interpreters, theologians, philosophers, writers, orators, biographers, and historians, as it has attracted this incident. Rarely have they paid attention to anything as they have to it.

³⁸ Refer to the book *Al-Ghadir* regarding the descent of these verses, Vol. 1, pages 214 and 217.

It is worth noting from reviewing history that the eighteenth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah was known among Muslims as the day of Eid al-Ghadir. This designation was so famous that Ibn Khallikan said about Al-Mustali ibn Al-Mustansir:

"He was appointed on the day of Ghadir Khumm, which is the eighteenth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah in the year 487 AH."

And he said in the biography of Al-Mustansir Billah al-Abbasid: "And he passed away on Thursday night, the twelfth night remaining from Dhu al-Hijjah in the year 787 AH." I say, and this is the night of Eid al-Ghadir, I mean the night of the eighteenth day of the month of Dhu al-Hijjah, which is Ghadir Khumm.³⁹

Abu Rayhan al-Biruni mentioned in his book "Al-Athar Al-Baqiyah" some of the celebrations practiced by the people of Islam.⁴⁰

Ibn Khalkan and Abu Rayhan al-Biruni are not the only ones who declared that this day is a celebration among the celebrations. Rather, Tha'labi also considered the Night of Ghadir among the well-known nights among Muslims.⁴¹

The covenant of this Islamic celebration and its roots trace back to the same day of Ghadir, because the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, commanded the Muhajirun and the Ansar, as well as his wives and women, to enter upon Ali (peace be upon him) and congratulate him on this great virtue.

Zaid ibn Arqam said: The first people whom the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, shook hands with were Abu Bakr, Umar, Uthman, Talha, Zubayr, the remaining Muhajirun and Ansar, and the rest of the people.⁴²

Praise be to Allah, who made us among those who hold on to the guardianship of Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him).

³⁹ Same source.

⁴⁰ Translation of "Al-Athar Al-Baqiyah," p. 395, "Al-Ghadir," vol. 1, p. 267.

⁴¹ "Thamar Al-Qulub," p. 511.

⁴² Refer to its source in "Al-Ghadir," vol. 1, p. 270.

Some of his characteristics

Some of his characteristics that I find it pleasant to mention, regarding his role in fulfilling the rights he has on Islam and Muslims in general, are as follows: He has unique characteristics that no one else shares:

- 1 - His birth inside the Kaaba.
- 2 - The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, embracing him since his childhood.
- 3 - Preceding everyone in embracing Islam.
- 4 - Fraternity with the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, unlike the other companions.
- 5 - The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, carrying him on his shoulder to remove the idols placed in the Kaaba.
- 6 - The continuity of the progeny of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, from his lineage.
- 7 - The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, spitting in his eyes on the day of Khaybar and praying for him not to be harmed by heat or poison.
- 8 - Love for him is faith and hatred of him is hypocrisy.
- 9 - The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, preferred him and his wife and children over other companions when it comes to interactions with Christians.
- 10 - The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, conveyed Surah Al-Bara'ah (Al-Tawbah) to him.
- 11 - The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, specifically appointed him as the leader on the day of Ghadir.
- 12 - He said, "Ask me before you lose me."

13 - The Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, chose him for washing, preparing and performing the funeral prayer for him.

14 - All people from different religions and others look at him as the greatest man known in history.⁴³

⁴³ These characteristics were extracted by the esteemed writer Muhammad Jawad Maghniyah, may Allah have mercy on him, in his book "Al-Shi'a wa Al-Tashayyu'," p. 234.

THE SECOND IMAM

Al-Hasan Ibn Ali Al-Mujtaba Abu
Muhammad

(peace be upon them both)

The Chosen One

He is the second Imam of the Ahlul-Bayt (the Holy Household of the Prophet), the first of the two grandsons (of the Prophet), and one of the masters of the youth of Paradise, the sweet basil of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and one of the five individuals under the cloak. His mother is Fatimah, the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, the lady of all the women in the worlds. He was born in Medina on the night of the fifteenth of the month of Ramadan in the third or second year of the Hijrah, and he was the first child of Ali and Fatimah, may peace be upon them.

*He was attributed to the shining brightness of the morning
and as a pillar from the splitting of dawn.*

It is narrated by Anas bin Malik who said: No one resembled the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, more than Al-Hasan bin Ali, may peace be upon them.⁴⁴

When Al-Hasan was born, Fatimah said to Ali, "Name him." Ali replied, "I cannot precede in naming him before the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny." Then the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, came and he was handed the child. He said: "O Allah, I seek refuge for him and his progeny in You from the accursed Satan." He then recited the Adhan (call to prayer) in his right ear and the Iqamah in his left ear.

Some of his famous titles include: Al-Taqi (the Pious), Al-Zaki (the Pure), and Al-Sibt (the Grandson).

His Knowledge

As for his knowledge, it is sufficient to know that he used to sit in the mosque of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, and people would gather around him. He would speak in a way that would heal the distress of the questioner and resolve the arguments of the disputants. It is narrated by Imam Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Ahmad al-Wahidi in his Tafsir al-Wasit that a man entered the mosque of Medina and found a person talking about the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, while people were gathered around him. The man approached him and said, "Tell me about *'the Witness and the Witnessed'?*"

⁴⁴ Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki (d. 855 AH): Al-Fusul al-Muhimma, p. 152.

[85:3] He replied, "Yes, as for the Witness, it is the Day of Friday, and as for the Witnessed, it is the Day of Arafah." The man moved on to another person speaking in the mosque and asked him about the Witness and the Witnessed. He replied, "As for the Witness, it is the Day of Friday, and as for the Witnessed, it is the Day of Sacrifice." The man then approached a third person, a young boy whose face shone like a golden coin, and he was speaking in the mosque. He asked him about the Witness and the Witnessed, and the boy replied, "Yes, as for the Witness, it is the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), and as for the Witnessed, it is the Day of Resurrection. Have you not heard Allah Almighty say, '**O Prophet, indeed We have sent you as a witness and a bringer of good tidings and a warner**' [33:45], and He has also said, '**That is a day unto which mankind will be gathered, and that is a day that will be witnessed.**'" [11:103] The man then asked about the first person, and they said it was Ibn Abbas. He asked about the second person, and they said it was Ibn Umar. Finally, he asked about the third person, and they said it was Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him).⁴⁵

His Asceticism

As for his asceticism, it suffices to mention what Al-Hafiz Abu Nu'aim narrated in his book with its chain of narration that he (peace be upon him) said: "I feel ashamed before my Lord to meet Him without having walked to His house." So he walked twenty times from Medina to Mecca on foot. It is also narrated by Al-Hafiz Abu Nu'aim in his book: He (peace be upon him) gave away his wealth twice and divided it into three portions, distributing it in the way of Allah.

He (peace be upon him) was one of the most detached people from the worldly pleasures and its delights. He was well aware of its deceptions and harms. He often expressed this in the following verse:

O people of the worldly pleasures, it has no lasting stay,

*Indeed, foolish is the one deluded by its transient shade.*⁴⁶

⁴⁵ Bihar al-Anwar 1/13.

⁴⁶ Ibn As-Sabbagh Al-Maliki: Al-Fusul Al-Muhimma 154.

His Patience

As for his patience, Ibn Khalikan narrated from Ibn A'isha: A man from the people of Sham said, "I entered the city of Medina - may blessings and peace be upon its inhabitants - and I saw a man riding a mule. I had never seen a more handsome face, nobler appearance, finer garment, or better mount than him. My heart inclined towards him, so I asked about him, and it was said, 'This is Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib.' My heart became filled with aversion, and I envied Ali for having a son like him. I approached him and said, 'Are you the son of Ali ibn Abi Talib?' He replied, 'Do you consider yourself a stranger?' I said, 'Yes.' He said, 'Come with us, for if you are in need of a home, we will provide you with one, or if you are in need of wealth, we will give you some, or if you are in need of assistance, we will help you.' He said, 'I turned away from him, and there is nothing on the earth more beloved to me than him. And I did not think of what he did and what I did except that I thanked him and felt ashamed of myself.'"⁴⁷

His Imamate

As for his imamate, what the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, stated is sufficient. He said, "These two sons of mine are Imams, whether they stand or sit." The Shia narrated through their methods from Salim bin Qais al-Hilali, who said: I witnessed the Commander of the Faithful (Ali), peace be upon him, when he appointed his son Hasan, peace be upon him, and I bear witness to his appointment of his son Husayn, peace be upon him, and Muhammad and all his children and the leaders of his Shia and the people of his household. Then he handed him the book and the weapon and said to him, "O my son, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, commanded me to advise you and hand over to you my books and weapons, just as he advised me and handed over to me his books and weapons. He commanded me to instruct you that when death approaches you, you should hand them over to your brother Husayn." Then he turned to his son Husayn, peace be upon him, and said, "And the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, commanded you to hand them over to your son here." Then he took the hand of Ali bin Husayn and said, "And the Messenger of Allah

⁴⁷ Ibn Khalikan: Wafayat Al-A'yan 2/68.

commanded you to hand them over to your son Muhammad bin Ali. So send salutations to him from the part of the Messenger of Allah and from my part."⁴⁸

Abu al-Farh al-Isfahani narrated: After the death of Amir al-Mu'minin Ali (peace be upon him), Hasan ibn Ali delivered a sermon and said, "Tonight, a man has departed who was not preceded by others in his deeds, nor will he be surpassed by others in his deeds. He fought alongside the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, and defended him with his own self. He used to send him forward with his standard while Gabriel supported him on his right and Michael supported him on his left. He would not return until God brought victory through his hands. He will not return until Allah opens the way for him. He passed away on the night when Jesus, son of Mary, ascended, and on that same night Joshua ibn Nun, the successor of Moses, also passed away. He left neither yellow [gold] nor white [silver] except for seven hundred dirhams, which remained from his charity. He intended to use them to purchase a servant for his family."

Then, sadness overwhelmed him, and he wept, and the people wept with him.

Then he said, "O people, whoever knows me has truly known me. And whoever does not know me, I am Hasan ibn Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. I am the son of the bearer of glad tidings. I am the son of the warner. I am the son of the one who invites to Allah, the Almighty, with His permission. I am the son of the shining lamp. I am from the Ahl al-Bayt whom Allah has purified from impurities and cleansed thoroughly. Allah has commanded their love in His Book, saying, ***"And whoever commits a good deed, We will increase him in goodness". [42:23]*** So, commitment to goodness is to love us, the Ahl al-Bayt."

Abu Mikhnaf said about his companions: "Then Ibn Abbas stood in front of them and called the people to pledge allegiance to him. They responded to him and said, 'We love him and acknowledge his right to the caliphate.' So they pledged allegiance to him."⁴⁹

⁴⁸ Sheikh Tabarsi (207-208 Hijri): "I'lam al-Wara bi A'lam al-Huda." Whoever wishes to understand the texts about his imamate must refer to Al-Kafi 1/297 and Ithbat al-Hudat 2/543-568, for he transmitted five texts on this matter.

⁴⁹ Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, 52.

Al-Mufid said: "His pledge of allegiance took place on Friday, the twenty-first day of the month of Ramadan in the year forty of the Hijra. He organized the workers and appointed the commanders, and Abdullah ibn Abbas went to Basra and examined the affairs."⁵⁰

Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani said: The first thing Al-Hasan did was to increase the stipend for the fighters by a hundred hundred. Ali did this on the Day of the Camel, and he [Al-Hasan] repeated it on the Day of the Allegiance. The caliphs followed his example after that.⁵¹

Al-Mufid said: When Muawiyah learned of the death of the Commander of the Faithful and the people's allegiance to his son Al-Hasan, he sent a man from Hamir to Kufa and a man from Bani al-Qayn to Basra to write to him with news and to sow discord against Al-Hasan. Al-Hasan became aware of this and ordered the capture of the Hamiri from Laham in Kufa. He was captured and ordered to be executed. He also wrote to Basra to capture the Qaini from Bani Salim. He was captured, and his neck was struck.⁵²

Then the correspondence⁵³ between Al-Hasan and Muawiyah continued and led to bitter incidents until it resulted in a peace agreement. Al-Hasan was forced to relinquish the caliphate in favor of Muawiyah. They made a peace agreement, and here is a description of it:

"In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful.

This is what Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib agreed upon with Muawiyah ibn Abi Sufyan: He agreed to surrender the authority of the Muslims to Muawiyah on the condition that he governs them according to the Book of Allah and the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah. Muawiyah is not allowed to appoint anyone as his successor after him, and the people should remain secure wherever they are in the lands of Allah, including Sham, Yemen, Iraq, and Hijaz.

⁵⁰ Al-Mufid, Al-Irshad, 188.

⁵¹ Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, 55.

⁵² Al-Mufid: Al-Irshad 188, Maqatil al-Talibiyyin 52.

⁵³ If anyone wishes to understand it thoroughly, they should refer to Maqatil al-Talibiyyin 53 to 72, and carefully study it and the apparent reluctance of Al-Hasan's companions. The secret of the Imam's peace agreement and his relinquishing of the caliphate becomes clear. He only reconciled to complete his argument against them. For further details, one can refer to the peace agreement of Al-Hasan by Sheikh Radi Al-Yasin.

Furthermore, the companions of Ali and his Shia (followers) should remain secure in their lives, wealth, wives, and children, wherever they are. Muawiyah, in turn, made a pledge to Allah and a covenant regarding this matter.

It was agreed that no harm, whether openly or secretly, should be inflicted upon Hasan ibn Ali, his brother Husayn, or any member of the household of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family. No one should be intimidated within any of the territories. Witnesses to this agreement are so and so, and Allah is sufficient as a witness.”⁵⁴

After the peace treaty was finalized, Muawiyah delivered a sermon from the pulpit and said: "By Allah, I did not fight against you so that you pray, fast, perform Hajj, or give Zakat. You were already doing that. But I fought against you to have control over you, and Allah has granted me that, even though you dislike it. Know that I have granted certain things to Hasan, and all of them are beneath my feet. I will not fulfill any of them for him."⁵⁵

His martyrdom

When Muawiyah violated his agreement with Imam Hasan (peace be upon him), and that was not surprising for a man whose father is Abu Sufyan and whose mother is Hind, and he is emancipated, son of the emancipated ones, he ordered for the pledge of allegiance to Yazid, his infamous son known for his madness, corruption, and heresy. Nothing weighed heavier on him than the order of Hasan ibn Ali (peace be upon them), so he secretly poisoned him, causing his death.

It has been narrated that Muawiyah sent a message to the daughter of Ash'ath (who was under the care of Hasan, peace be upon him), saying, "I will marry you to my son Yazid if you poison Hasan ibn Ali." He sent her a hundred thousand dirhams, so she accepted and poisoned Hasan. He fulfilled his promise with money but did not marry her.⁵⁶

When his death approached, he entrusted his brother Husayn (peace be upon him) and said, "When I die, wash me, shroud me, carry me on my bed to the grave of my grandfather, the

⁵⁴ Ibn Sabagh al-Maliki: Al-Fusul al-Muhimma, 163.

⁵⁵ Al-Mufid: Al-Irshad, 191, Najaf edition.

⁵⁶ Maqtal al-Talibiyyin 73.

Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, then return me to the grave of my grandmother Fatimah bint Asad and bury me there. I swear by Allah, you must fulfill my request without spilling any blood."

When they carried him to the Rawdah [the place located between the pulpit and the room of the Prophet] of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, Marwan and his Umayyad companions did not doubt that they would bury him near the grave of his grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny. They gathered and armed themselves, and Aisha followed them on a mule, saying, "What is it with you? Do you want to let someone whom I do not like enter my house?" Marwan said, "O Lord, this is a riot, it is better than a truce. Uthman is buried in the farthest part of Medina, and Hasan is to be buried with the Prophet?" The situation almost led to discord between the Hashemites and the Umayyads. But because of Hasan's will, they took him to al-Baqi' and buried him next to his grandmother Fatimah bint Asad.⁵⁷

Hasan passed away at the age of 47, and the year of his death was the 50th year after the Prophet's migration.

Interestingly, Marwan ibn al-Hakam also carried his bed to al-Baqi' and Husayn said to him, "Are you carrying his bed? By Allah, you used to give him bitter grief." Marwan replied, "I did it to someone who had the patience of mountains."⁵⁸

When Muawiyah learned of Hasan's death, he prostrated and those around him also prostrated, and he glorified Allah, and those around him also glorified Allah. This is mentioned by Az-Zamakhshari in "Rabi' al-Abrar," Ibn Abdul-Barr in "Al-Isti'ab," and others.

One of the poets said:

Today, the son of Hind rejoices,

Showing his arrogance since Hasan's death.

O son of Hind, if you taste the cup of misery,

⁵⁷ Al-Irshad 193, Kashf al-Ghummah 1/209, Maqtal al-Talibiyyin 74-75.

⁵⁸ Maqtal al-Talibiyyin 76.

You will be in this world like something that never was.

So do not rejoice over it,

For every living being is bound to death.⁵⁹

This is an overview of Al-Hasan's life, filled with bitter incidents. We have left out much of what relates to different aspects of his life, especially what has been reported about his sermons, messages, and concise words. Those who wish for more details can refer to "Tuhaf al-Uqul"⁶⁰, as it includes a significant portion of his statements.

⁵⁹ Al-Amin al-Amili: Fi Rihab A'immat Ahl al-Bayt 43.

⁶⁰ al-Harrani, Hasan ibn Sha'ba, Tuhaf al-Uqul 225-236

THE THIRD IMAM

Al-Husayn Ibn Ali Sayyid ul-Shuhadah

(peace be upon them both)

Master of Martyrs

He is the third Imam of the Ahl al-Bayt, the second of the two grandsons, the master of the youths of Paradise, the sweet basil of the chosen one [Prophet Muhammad], peace be upon him and his family, one of the five members under the cloak, the master of martyrs, and his mother is Fatimah the daughter of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family.

He was born in Medina on the third of Sha'ban in the third or fourth year after the Hijra. When he was born, he was brought to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, who rejoiced at his birth. He recited the call to prayer in his right ear and the iqamah in his left ear. On the seventh day, he named him Husayn and sacrificed a ram on his behalf. He ordered his mother to shave his head and give silver in charity equal to the weight of his hair, just as she had done for his brother Hasan. She complied with his command.

He was martyred on Friday, the tenth of Muharram in the year 61 AH, or it is said on Saturday. He had spent five or six years in the company of the noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, and lived with his father for 36 years and with his brother for 46 years.

The life of Imam Husayn, from his birth to his martyrdom, was filled with significant events. Discussing, let alone fully encompassing, every aspect related to him would require extensive writing. Numerous authors and researchers have written about various aspects of his life, including the narrations transmitted from his grandfather and father regarding his merits, knowledge, debates, sermons, writings, eloquence, generosity, asceticism, worship, compassion for the poor and needy, as well as his companions and the narrators who transmitted his teachings and the generation that was raised under his guidance. Valuable and countless works have been dedicated to these subjects.

However, behind that, Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) had another characteristic, which is his struggle and jihad in the field of religion and politics, for which he was known. It became a religious and political school, perhaps it became his distinctive feature, and the characteristic that colored his noble life. It served as an example and role model for generations and centuries, and his approach still influences the conscience and awareness of the nation, motivating open minds and enlightened hearts to take action, revolution, and confront the tyrants of the time with violence and severity.

Here we present to you a sample of the gems of his words in that field, so that you can grasp his struggle and jihad against atheistic currents and moral collapse.

His defiance of oppression and resistance against injustice

When his brother Hasan passed away in the fiftieth year of Hijra, he appointed Imam Husayn as his successor. The Shia gathered around him, resorting to him in their affairs and travels. There were scribes of Muawiyah in Medina who wrote to him about important events that did not align with the corrupt Umayyad authority, and which posed a serious threat to its illegitimate existence. Their main concern was Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) due to his unwavering and unyielding stance for truth. Therefore, Marwan ibn al-Hakam, who worked under Muawiyah in Medina, wrote: "Men from the people of Iraq and the faces of the people of Hijaz are showing their loyalty to Husayn bin Ali, and he is not safe in his garment. I have investigated this matter, and I have been informed that he does not want any dispute to arise on this day, and I am not confident that this will continue afterwards."

When the letter reached Muawiyah, he wrote a message to Husayn, and this is its text: "After praising God, I have received information about you, and if it is true, I want to discuss it with you. By Allah, whoever gives a pledge and covenant to Allah is deserving of fulfilling it, and the right of people to fulfillment is for those who are in danger for your sake, your honor, and your position to fulfill it..."⁶¹

And when the message reached Al-Husayn ibn Ali, he wrote back to him a detailed letter, in which his crimes, his breaking of the covenant and violation of the pledge were mentioned. We extract from it the following:

"Are you not the killer of Hujr ibn Adi, the brother of Kinda and his companions who were praying, denying injustice, detesting innovation, enjoining good, forbidding evil, and not fearing the blame of anyone in the sight of Allah? Then you unjustly and aggressively killed them after giving them strong oaths of security and confirmed covenants. You do not consider the incident that occurred between you and them as an impediment, showing boldness towards Allah and disregarding your pledge.

⁶¹ Al-Imamah wal-Siyasah 1/163.

Are you not the killer of Amr ibn Al-Hamq, the companion of the Messenger of Allah, the righteous servant whose worship had made him weak, causing his body to wither and his complexion to turn pale? So you killed him after you gave him strong oaths of security and confirmed covenants that, if you understood the severity of it, would cause mountains to move.

Are you not the impostor Ziyad ibn Sumayyah who was born on the bed of 'Ubaid ibn Tha'qif, so you claimed him to be the son of your father? And the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, said: 'The child belongs to the bed, and the adulterer gets the stone.' So you deliberately abandoned the tradition of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, and followed your desires without guidance from Allah. Then you appointed him over the people of Islam, and he started killing them, cutting off their hands and feet, gouging out their eyes, and crucifying them on palm trunks. It is as if you are not from this nation, and they are not from you.

Are you not the companion of the Hadramis whom Ibn Sumayyah wrote about, claiming that they follow the religion of Ali - may Allah's blessings be upon him? So you wrote to him: Kill everyone who follows the religion of Ali. Thus, he killed them and treated them accordingly by your command. The religion of Ali is the religion of his cousin, may Allah bless him and his family, who used to strike your father and strike you. It is with that religion that you hold your council, and were it not for that, your honor and the honor of your fathers would have been as insignificant as two journeys, the winter and summer journeys."⁶²

This is Husayn, and this is his commitment to fighting injustice, defending truth, and supporting the oppressed during the era of Muawiyah. We mentioned these excerpts as a sample of his numerous speeches and messages documented by history.

His refusal of allegiance to Yazid

When Muawiyah perished in the middle of Rajab in the year 60 AH, Yazid wrote to Walid ibn Utbah, the governor of Medina, instructing him to take allegiance from Husayn - peace be upon him. So Walid executed Yazid's order and summoned Husayn - peace be upon him. Husayn

⁶² Al-Imamah wal Siyasa, Volume 1, page 164.

knew what he intended, so he called a group of his followers and ordered them to bear arms, saying, "Sit at the door, and when you hear my voice raised, enter upon me and do not fear for me."

Husayn - peace be upon him - went to Walid, and Walid informed him of Muawiya's appointment of Yazid. Then Walid read to Husayn the letter of Yazid ibn Muawiya. Husayn - peace be upon him - said, "I do not see that you are convinced of my allegiance to Yazid secretly, until I publicly declare it and the people become aware of it." Walid said to him, "Indeed." Husayn - peace be upon him - replied, "Reflect on it overnight and consider your opinion." Walid said, "Leave in the name of Allah Almighty." Marwan said: "By Allah, if an hour passes and you have not pledged allegiance, I will have no power over you to do so thereafter except that casualties increase between you and him. Detain this man so that he does not leave your presence until he pledges allegiance or his neck is struck.." At that moment, Husayn - peace be upon him - leaped up and said, "Is it you, O son of Zirqa', who will kill me, or is it him? By Allah, you lie and commit a great sin." Then he left."⁶³

The following day, Husayn sought information and found Marwan ibn Hakam confronting him on his way. Marwan said, "O Abu Abdullah, I advise you to pledge allegiance to Yazid, for it is better for you in your religion and in your worldly affairs." Husayn rejected his proposal and said, "Indeed, we belong to Allah, and to Him we shall return. Peace be upon Islam if the Ummah is afflicted with a shepherd like Yazid!" Then he said, "O Marwan, are you advising me to pledge allegiance to Yazid?! Yazid, the sinful man! You have uttered absurd and misguided words. But I don't blame you, for you are the cursed one whom the Messenger of Allah cursed, while you were in the loins of your father, Hakam ibn al-Aas. And whoever is cursed by the Messenger of Allah, it is not surprising that he would call for pledging allegiance to Yazid. I dissociate myself from you, O enemy of Allah! We are the household of the Messenger of Allah, upon which the truth flows in our tongues. I heard my grandfather, the Messenger of Allah, saying, 'The caliphate is forbidden for the progeny of Abu Sufyan, the emancipated ones and the sons of the emancipated ones. So if you see Muawiyah on my pulpit, strike his stomach.' The people of Medina saw Muawiyah on the pulpit of the Messenger of

⁶³ Al-Mufid: Al-Irshad, p. 200, printed by Najaf.

Allah, but they did not do what they were commanded, so they were afflicted with his son, Yazid"⁶⁴

Afterwards, Al-Husayn left Medina for Mecca. When the people of Kufa learned about the death of Muawiyah, the Shia gathered at the house of Suleiman ibn Surad and agreed to write letters to Al-Husayn, urging him to come to them in Kufa because the people had pledged allegiance to him and rejected the allegiance to the Umayyads. They insisted on this matter, emphasizing to the Imam, peace be upon him, that the ways are clear and the circumstances are suitable for his arrival. They wrote to him, among other things:

"Now then, the greenery has flourished and the fruits have ripened, if you wish, come with your enlisted soldiers."

When the letters from the people of Kufa reached Husayn, peace be upon him, he sent his cousin Muslim bin Aqil, may Allah be pleased with him, as his representative to Kufa to receive their allegiance and verify the seriousness of the matter. He wrote to them:

"Now then, Hani and Saeed came with your letters, and they were the last of your messengers who arrived before me. I have understood everything you mentioned and stated. Your message is clear that 'there is no leader for us, so we hope that Allah will unite us with you upon truth and guidance.' I am sending my brother, my cousin, and my trusted person from my household, Muslim ibn Aqil. If he writes to me that your opinions, arguments, and the majority of you are consistent with what your messengers conveyed and what I read in your letters, then I will come to you soon, if Allah wills. By my life, the Imam is none other than the ruler who governs according to the Book, upholds justice, fulfills the rights of the true religion, and dedicates himself to the cause of Allah."⁶⁵

Then the Imam departed from Mecca towards Kufa on the day of Tarwiya or the day before it, accompanied by his family, companions, and Shia. He received a letter from Muslim ibn Aqil, informing him of the allegiance of eighteen thousand people from the people of Kufa. This was before matters took a turn in a way that the minds cannot believe. Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad, through his cunning, deceit, and excessive killing, managed to dampen the spirits of the

⁶⁴ Al-Khwarazmi: Maqtal al-Husayn, vol. 1, pp. 184-185.

⁶⁵ Al-Mufid: Al-Irshad 204.

people of Kufa and break the allegiance to Imam Husayn, peace be upon him. He cruelly and savagely killed his envoy.

When the Imam, peace be upon him, approached Kufa, Al-Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi, with a thousand horsemen, was sent by the governor Ubaydullah ibn Ziyad to intercept and compel him to pledge allegiance to Yazid and forcefully bring him to Kufa. At that moment, the Imam stood and delivered a sermon to his companions and Al-Hurr, saying:

"O people, indeed, the Messenger of Allah said: 'Whoever sees an oppressive ruler who permits what Allah has prohibited, violates the covenant of Allah, opposes the Sunnah of the Messenger of Allah, and treats his servants with sin and aggression, without opposing him with action or speech, then it is upon Allah to admit him to the same fate.' These people have adhered to the obedience of Satan and abandoned the obedience of the Most Merciful. They have shown corruption, violated the boundaries, confiscated wealth, made what Allah has made unlawful permissible, and prohibited what He has made lawful. And I have more right than anyone else."⁶⁶

The Real Motive for the Emigration to Iraq

Although the apparent motive for his emigration - peace be upon him - to Iraq was the messages of the people of Kufa and their messengers, to the extent that the Imam (peace be upon him) used them as evidence when he confronted Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi and Umar ibn Sa'd when they asked him about the reason for his arrival in Iraq. He said: "The people of this Egypt of yours wrote to me to come."⁶⁷

However, the true secret behind his emigration - peace be upon him - despite his clear realization of the dangerous consequences it would entail for his noble life, which he cherished, can be understood through a comprehensive examination of his life journey and how he dealt with the course of events.

The inevitable matter that the Imam - peace be upon him - had to confront was the realization of what conceding and surrendering the caliphate to Yazid ibn Muawiyah meant for

⁶⁶ Al-Tabari: History 4/304, Events of the year 61 AH. For what happened to the Imam and his household until they reached the land of Karbala, refer to Al-Muqatil.

⁶⁷ Al-Mufid: Al-Irshad, pp. 224-228.

the Muslims, despite his well-known transgressions, corruption, and clear deviation from the most basic Islamic principles. This indicates the great deviation that has affected the concept of Islamic leadership and its alarming departure from its legitimate essence.

Therefore, a courageous stand was necessary to restore a portion of the nation's lost guidance and its stolen thinking. Imam Husayn - peace be upon him - openly declared this when Marwan ibn Hakam demanded allegiance to Yazid, and he said, "So peace be upon Islam if the nation is afflicted by the rule of someone like Yazid", as you were previously shown.

Yes, the Messenger of Allah, peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: "There are two types among my nation: when they are righteous, my nation is righteous, and when they are corrupt, my nation is corrupt." It was asked, "O Messenger of Allah, who are they?" He said: "The jurists and the rulers."⁶⁸ If the righteousness or corruption of the nation depends on the righteousness or corruption of the caliphate, then the leadership of someone like Yazid only adds to the corruption and devastation.

Islamic leadership lies between appointment and consultation, and Yazid did not possess authority through divine appointment or through consultation with the nation. This is what the Muslims at that time realized, as they wrote a letter to Husayn - peace be upon him - in which they said: "Now then, praise be to Allah, who shattered your oppressive and stubborn enemy, who infiltrated this nation, manipulated its affairs, oppressed its people, and imposed his will upon them without their consent, then he killed the best of them and left behind the worst of them."⁶⁹

The son (Yazid) was not unique in usurping the rights of the nation, but his father, Muawiyah, preceded him in that, as is well known. He does not fear anyone, and Imam Ali (peace be upon him) refers to this distorted reality in his book addressing Muawiyah, saying:

"Now, this is the time that you should derive benefit by observing a clear view of the main matters, because you have been treading in the path of your forefathers in making wrong claims, spreading false and untrue notions, claiming for yourself what is far above you and demanding what is not meant for you, because you want to run away from right and to revolt

⁶⁸ Al-Qummi: Safinat al-Bihar, Vol. 2, p. 30, Order.

⁶⁹ Al-Jazari: Al-Kamil, Vol. 2, pp. 266-267; Al-Irshad, p. 203.

against what is more fastened to your flesh and blood namely what has been heard by the depth of your ears and has filled your chest. *And after forsaking right there remains nothing except clear misguidance.*" [10:32]⁷⁰

These mentioned parallels in history drove Imam Husayn to revolt and present himself and his household as pure sacrifices in support of this great religion. He was well aware that with the material capabilities he had at his disposal, he would not be able to confront a mighty state possessing immense material resources capable of crushing any youthful rebellion. Yes, Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) definitely understood this reality, but he wanted to water the withering tree of Islam with his pure and sacred blood, a tree that the Umayyads intended to uproot from its roots.

Moreover, the Imam (peace be upon him) wanted to break the barrier of fear that had engulfed the nation, making them hesitant and perplexed in the face of the tyranny of the oppressors and unjust rulers. He wanted his revolution to become a school from which future generations would learn the meaning of heroism and sacrifice for principles and beliefs. All of this occurred after the martyrdom of the Imam (peace be upon him), and history stands as the best witness to that.

Prophetic death

Since the birth of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), it had been known that he would be martyred in Iraq, in the land of Karbala. The Muslims were aware of this during the time of the noble Prophet (peace be upon him and his family) and his successor. Therefore, people were anticipating the occurrence of that tragedy. Additionally, there were many indications clearly pointing to the inevitability of his martyrdom (peace be upon him), such as:

1. Several narrators, including Anas ibn al-Harith, who was martyred in Karbala, reported that he heard the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) saying: "Indeed, my son will be killed in a land called Karbala. Whoever witnesses this event should support him."

⁷⁰ Nahj al-Balagha, Section of Books, Number 65.

Anas ibn al-Harith went out and was killed in Karbala along with Imam Husayn (peace be upon him).⁷¹

2. The experts and politicians of that time unanimously agreed that going to Iraq posed a great danger to the life of the Imam (peace be upon him) and his household. They advised him not to go, but he insisted on his decision to leave. This can be seen in the discussions between the Imam and these individuals, including his brother Muhammad ibn al-Hanafiyah, his cousin Ibn Abbas, and the women of the Banu Hashim. Despite their advice, the Imam apologized to them and made it clear that he was determined to go.⁷²

3. When the Imam set out for Iraq, he delivered a sermon and said: "Praise be to Allah, and what Allah wills, and there is no power except with Allah, and may Allah send blessings upon His Messenger. Death is an adornment for the children of Adam, like the collar on the neck of a young woman. What has brought me closer to my ancestors is the yearning of Jacob for Joseph, and it is better for me to meet my demise. It is as if my joints are being severed by the sharpness of swords, between the cries of the wailing women and Karbala, they will be filled with my blood and my intestines will be torn apart. No one can escape the fate written with the pen. May Allah be pleased with our satisfaction, the people of the Household. We will endure his trials and he will reward us like the patient ones. The flesh of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family, will not deviate. Rather, it is a group chosen by him in the holy sanctuary, pleasing to his eyes, and through them, His promise will be fulfilled. So whoever among us is willing to sacrifice his life, our abode will be in the presence of Allah Himself. Let him join us, for I am setting forth in the morning, if Allah wills."⁷³

4. When Abdullah ibn Umar learned of what Husayn (peace be upon him) had decided, he visited him and wept when he saw him determined to proceed. He said, "I entrust you to Allah's protection from being killed."⁷⁴

⁷¹ Al-Isti'ab, Vol. 1, p. 81, Number 266.

⁷² Refer to the dialogues that took place between the Imam and these individuals in Al-Irshad, pp. 201-202, published in Najaf, Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, p. 109, and Al-Luhuf, 20th edition, Baghdad.

⁷³ Al-Luhuf, 41st edition, Baghdad.

⁷⁴ Tadhkirat al-Khawass, 217-218.

5. When Husayn (peace be upon him) left Mecca, he was met by the poet Farazdaq, who said to him, "Where are you going, O son of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah's peace and blessings be upon him and his family? What hastens you away from the season?" Husayn replied, "If I had not hastened, I would have been taken." He then asked him: "Tell me about the people behind you." Farazdaq said, "You have asked the knowledgeable one, the hearts of the people are with you, but their swords are against you."⁷⁵

6. When news reached Husayn (peace be upon him) of the killing of Muslim ibn Aqil, Hani ibn Urwa, and Abdullah ibn Yaqtar, he said to his companions, "Our Shia have abandoned us. Whoever among you prefers to leave, let him depart without any blame." People started dispersing, going right and left until only his companions who came with him from Medina remained, along with a few who joined him. Nevertheless, he continued his journey towards Kufa. When he passed by Batn al-'Aqaba, he was met by a sheikh from the Banu 'Ukrimah tribe named 'Umar ibn Luwzan. He asked him, "Where are you heading?" The Imam, peace be upon him, replied, "To Kufa." The sheikh then said, "I urge you not to proceed. By Allah, you will not be met with anything but spearheads and drawn swords." The Imam replied, "My intention is not hidden, and Allah, the Most High, is not incapable of fulfilling His command."⁷⁶

In the same text, there is an indication that the Imam was aware of what others feared, and that if he proceeded to Kufa, his fate would be death. Nevertheless, he continued his journey, seeking martyrdom in defense of the faith and to thwart the plots of his enemies. This way, no one could have an excuse to justify their betrayal and weakness.

Indeed, Husayn (peace be upon him) was fully aware of his destiny and the inevitable outcome of his journey. Nothing could stand in the way of his determination to uphold the word of religion and strengthen its foundations, which the Umayyads sought to undermine. Look at him as he addresses Hurr ibn Yazid al-Riyahi, who warns him of the dangers of his steadfastness, saying to him, "Are you frightening me with death? Are your speeches intended to kill me? I will say as the brother of Aws said to his cousin when he sought to support the Messenger of Allah and his cousin threatened him with fear: "Where are you going? You will be killed!" He replied:

⁷⁵ Al-Irshad, p. 218.

⁷⁶ Same source: p. 223.

*I will continue, and death is no disgrace to a young man,
 If he truly intends and strives as a devoted Muslim, and he comforts righteous men with
 his own self,
 And parts from the righteous and opposes the criminal. For if I live, I do not regret, and if
 I die, I do not grieve,
 It is enough humiliation for you to live and be compelled.⁷⁷*

So, the martyrdom of Imam Husayn (peace be upon him) had a significant impact in awakening the consciousness of the nation and encouraging it to revolt against the Umayyad government, which had become a symbol of corruption and deviation from the religion. Therefore, revolutions followed his martyrdom by Muslims in Iraq and the Hijaz. These uprisings, although they did not achieve their goal at the time, played a fundamental role in the fall of the Umayyad government after a while.

The Success of Karbala

Indeed, it has been well said: "If it weren't for the uprising of Husayn (peace be upon him) and his companions (may Allah be pleased with them) on the day of Taff [Ashura], Islam would not have stood upright, and its pillar would not have remained green. Muawiya and his followers would have caused its [Islam's] death, and they would have buried it in the beginning of its reign in its grave." Therefore, all Muslims, rather Islam itself, from the moment of its establishment until the end of time, are indebted to Husayn (peace be upon him) and his companions (may Allah be pleased with them).⁷⁸

Indeed, Imam Husayn - peace be upon him - recognized the reality of Yazid seizing the reins of leadership after the Prophet Muhammad - peace be upon him and his family - and saw Yazid for who he truly was: a deviant, corrupt enemy of Allah and His Messenger. Yazid could not hide his true intentions when he brought forth the head of the master of martyrs before him, and he recited:

⁷⁷ Al-Mufeed: Al-Irshad 225, and Al-Tabari in his history 5/204.

⁷⁸ Jannat al-Ma'wa 208 by Sheikh Muhammad Husayn Kashif al-Ghita.

I wish my elders at Badr could witness
Saw the lamentation of the Khazraj from the fall of the brave ones
We killed their leaders and achieved justice,
They would have cheered and shouted happily,
We avenged the killing of Badr, so their people praised and celebrated
Then they would have said, good job O Yazid
I shall not be from the Khandaf if I do not avenge,
From the sons of Ahmad for what he had done
The Hashemites played with the kingdom,
Neither news came nor revelation was sent down.⁷⁹

As for the explanation of his departure from Mecca heading towards Iraq and the incidents he faced during his journey until he reached the land of Karbala, where he was martyred along with his children and companions, who numbered 72 thirsty and hungry individuals, it is beyond the scope of this research. Many books and encyclopedias have been written about it. May peace be upon him on the day he was born, the day he was martyred, and the day he will be resurrected alive.

⁷⁹ The first two lines are from Ibn al-Zubayr, and the last three lines are from Yazid.

THE FOURTH IMAM

Ali Ibn al-Husayn Zayn al-'Abideen

(peace be upon them)

The Adornment of worshipers

He is the fourth Imam of the Pure Household, famous as Zain al-Abidin or as-Sajjad, and also known as Dhu al-Thafinat. He was born in Medina in the year 38 or 37 AH and passed away there in the year 95 or 94 AH, on a Saturday, the twelfth of Muharram.

Ibn Khallikan said: He is one of the twelve Imams and one of the leaders of the Tabi'in. Al-Zuhri said: I have not seen a Qurayshi better than him. His virtues and merits are too numerous to be counted and mentioned. When he died, he was buried in al-Baqi' cemetery next to his uncle, al-Hasan, under the dome where the grave of al-Abbas (may Allah be pleased with him) is located.⁸⁰

After the martyrdom of his father, Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), in Karbala, he assumed the Imamate. To learn about the narrations related to his Imamate, it is advisable to refer to books of hadith and doctrines that cover this important aspect. Particularly noteworthy among them are the book Al-Kafi by Al-Kulayni, Al-Irshad by Sheikh al-Mufid, Kifayat al-Athar by Al-Khazzaz, and Ithbat al-Huda by Al-Hurr al-Amili.

If one desires to learn about his virtues, miracles, and merits in various fields such as knowledge, patience, courage, steadfastness in Paradise, extreme generosity and kindness, piety, abundant night prayers and supererogatory acts of worship, eloquence and rhetoric, his strong presence among people and their love for him, and his upbringing of a great generation of companions and scholars who dedicated their lives to the service of Islam, and other aspects that cannot be covered here, it is necessary to consult multiple encyclopedias that have explained and detailed these matters.

Aspects of his biography, peace be upon him, although we suffice here with a specific aspect of his biography - peace be upon him - related to a specific matter:

⁸⁰ Wafayat al-A'yan 3/267-269.

His Grandeur and High Status

Indeed, he - peace be upon him - was greatly respected among the people, to the extent that this high status made the princes and rulers envy him. History mentions numerous and diverse evidences of this. For example, when Hisham ibn Abd al-Malik performed Hajj before assuming the caliphate, he tried to get to the Black Stone but failed. Then Ali ibn al-Husayn - peace be upon them - came, and the people stepped aside until he got to it. Some people asked Hisham, "Who is this?" He replied, "I don't know him" (although he knew that it was Ali ibn al-Husayn - peace be upon them). Al-Farazdaq overheard him and said, "But I know him, that is Ali ibn al-Husayn, the adornment of the worshippers:

“This is he whose ability the valley (of Mecca) recognizes,

He is known by the (Sacred) House and the Holy sanctuary and the lands outside the sanctuary.

This is the son of the best of God’s servants.

This is the pure pious man, the pure eminent man.

There is a cane in his hand. Its smell is fragrant from the hand of the most wonderful (of all the people), who is proud.

He only speaks when he smiles.

When the Quraysh saw him, their spokesman said: Liberality terminates at the outstanding qualities of this (man). He belongs to the top of glory which the Arabs of Islam and non-Arabs fall short of reaching.

This is the son of Fatima if you do not recognize him.

The prophets yielded to his grandfather’s favor.

Your words ‘who is this?’ do not harm him.

All the Arabs and non-Arabs recognize him whom you deny.”

(and the rest of the poem, which the Ummah has preserved, and some poets have memorized). This weighed heavily on Hisham, so he ordered his imprisonment. They imprisoned him between Mecca and Medina. He objected to Hisham's actions, saying:

Would you imprison me between Mecca and the place

To which the hearts of people are drawn, turning their heads?

My head was not a head of a master,

Nor were my eyes eager to observe her flaws.

So he released him from prison, and Ali ibn al-Husayn - peace be upon them - then sent him ten thousand dirhams and said, "Forgive us, Abu Firas. If we had more than this at this time, we would have sent it to you." Al-Farazdaq replied, "I said what I said only for the sake of Allah." Ali - peace be upon him - said to him, "Allah has seen your position and appreciated it. However, we, the Ahlul Bayt, if we commit to something, we do not retract from it, and we swear by it." So he accepted it.

His Detachment, Worship, and Consolation of the Poor

As for his detachment, worship, and consolation of the poor, and his fear of Allah, it is unnecessary to elaborate. It is narrated about him - peace be upon him - that his complexion would turn pale when he performed ablution, and people would ask, "What is it that affects you during ablution?" He replied, "Do you know before whom I am about to stand?"

Among his sayings - peace be upon him - is that some people worship Allah out of fear, and that is the worship of slaves. Some people worship Him out of desire [for something], and that is the worship of merchants. And some people worship Him out of gratitude, and that is the worship of the free.

And when a questioner came to him, he would say to him: "Welcome to the one who carries my provisions to the Hereafter."

And he - peace be upon him - used to give a lot of charity and was keen on it. He would deliver his charity at night without anyone knowing about it. It is narrated that he - peace be

upon him - used to support a hundred families from the people of Medina who did not know who brought them the charity, and when he - peace be upon him - passed away, they realized that.

In another narration, it is mentioned that he - peace be upon him - used to carry a bag of bread on his back at night, and he would give it as charity, saying: "The charity of secrecy extinguishes the wrath of the Lord." In another narration, the people of Medina used to say: "We have never lost the charity of secrecy until Ali bin Husayn - peace be upon him - passed away."⁸¹

A man said to Sa'id ibn al-Musayyib, "I have not seen a more pious man than so-and-so," mentioning a person's name. Sa'id replied, "Have you not seen 'Ali ibn al-Husayn?" The man said, "No." Sa'id then said, "You have not seen anyone more pious than him."

Abu Hazim said, "I have not seen a better Hashemite than 'Ali ibn al-Husayn."

Tawus said, "I saw 'Ali ibn al-Husayn (peace be upon him) prostrating on the ground, so I thought to myself, 'He is a righteous man from a noble family. I should listen to what he is saying.' So I listened to him and heard him say, 'Your slave is at your door, your poor is at your door, your beggar is at your door, and your needy is at your door.'" Tawus added, "By Allah, I never invoked these words in times of distress except that my problems were resolved."

'Ali ibn al-Husayn used to pray one thousand units of prayer every day and night. When he would wake up in the morning, he would faint, and the wind would sway him like a reed. One day, while he was outside, a man met him and insulted him. His slaves and followers became agitated and approached him. Ali (peace be upon him) said to them, "Wait, restrain yourselves." Then he turned to the man and said to him, "We have concealed most of our affairs from you. Do you have any need that we can assist you with?" The man felt ashamed and Ali (peace be upon him) gave him the shirt he was wearing and ordered a thousand dirhams to be given to him. After that, the man would say, "I bear witness that you are from the progeny of the messengers."⁸²

⁸¹ Tadhkirat al-Khawass 294.

⁸² Kashf al-Ghummah, Volume 2, pages 292-293

The intellectual revolution of the Imam

As for the intellectual and mystical revolution, it lies in his supplications, which the scholars have narrated with their connected chains of transmission. These supplications have been compiled in what is known as the "Sahifa Sajjadiya," which has spread throughout the world. It is the Psalms of the Family of Muhammad. It is a great loss that our Sunni brethren, with the exception of a few rare individuals, do not acknowledge the value and authenticity of this treasure.

Indeed, the eloquence of its words, the eloquence of its meanings, the exaltedness of its contents, and the various forms of humility and praise for Allah, as well as the remarkable styles in seeking His forgiveness, His generosity, and resorting to Him, are powerful evidence of its attribution to him. This pearl is from that ocean, this gem is from that mine, and this fruit is from that tree. Its fame is undeniable, and its chains of transmission go back to its author, as trustworthy narrators have transmitted it through their connected chains of transmission to Zain al-Abidin.⁸³

One of the media sent a copy of the Sahifa with a message to the esteemed scholar, Sheikh Al-Tantawi (who passed away in 1358 AH). In his response to the message, he wrote: "It is unfortunate that until now we have not come across this valuable and eternal legacy in the inheritances of Prophethood and the Ahl al-Bayt. Whenever I contemplate it, I find it superior to the words of creatures, other than the words of the Creator".⁸⁴

And it was known among the Shia as the first Sahifa, which includes sixty-one supplications in various forms of seeking goodness and asking from Allah, teaching humans how to turn to their Lord in times of hardship and tasks, how to seek their needs from Him, how to humble and implore to Him, and how to praise and thank Him. However, a group of scholars supplemented it by collecting additional supplications and compiled them in five separate volumes, the last of which was compiled by the esteemed scholar Sayyid Muhsin Al-Ameen Al-Amili - may his secret be sanctified.

⁸³ Fi Rihab A'immat Ahl al-Bayt, Volume 3, page 414.

⁸⁴ Muqaddamat al-Sahifa, written by the esteemed scholar Al-Mir'ashi - may his secret be sanctified - 28.

The esteemed scholar Hujjat al-Islam Sayyid Muhammad Baqir Al-Abtahi - may his shadow endure - collected all the supplications of the Imam found in these newspapers in one comprehensive book. In the introduction, he stated:

"It is necessary to mention that his supplications (peace be upon him) had two aspects: a devotional aspect and a social aspect that aligns with the path of the reformist movement led by the Imam (peace be upon him) during that difficult period. By his exceptional and comprehensive ability, he endowed his supplications - in addition to their devotional essence - with a multidimensional social content, carrying fertile concepts and vibrant ideas. He (peace be upon him) is the owner of a divine school, sometimes teaching the believer how to glorify and sanctify God, how to enter the door of repentance, how to converse and turn to Him, and on other occasions, guiding him on the path of proper interaction with society, teaching him the manner of being good to parents, explaining the rights of parents, children, relatives, friends, and neighbors. Then he clarifies the virtues of deeds and what the Muslim should adhere to in his social conduct, all in a splendid and eloquent educational style."

The essence of the statement: It was an innovative method of conveying Islamic thought and authentic Islamic concepts to thirsty hearts and eager minds, to nourish them with its fruits and draw from its wellspring. It was truly an exemplary educational process, modeled by Imam Sajjad (peace be upon him), drawing inspiration from the lives of the prophets and the practices of the messengers.⁸⁵

And from his supplications - peace be upon him - in this book is his supplication on the Day of Arafah, including:

"O Allah, this is the Day of Arafah, a day which You hast made noble, given honor, and magnified. Within it You hast spread Your mercy, showed kindness through Your pardon, and made plentiful Your giving, and by it You hast been bounteous toward Your servants.

O Allah, I am Your servant whom You favored before creating him and after creating him. You madest him one of those whom You guided to Your religion, gavest success in

⁸⁵ Al-Sahifa Al-Sajjadiyya Al-Jami'a, 13.

fulfilling Your right, preserved through Your cord, included within Your party, and directed aright to befriend Your friends and show enmity to Thine enemies."

Treatise on Rights (Risalat al-Huquq)

Imam Ali ibn al-Husayn has a well-known book called the Treatise on Rights. Al-Saduq mentioned it in his book "Khisal"⁸⁶ with a reliable chain of narrators, and Al-Hasan ibn Shu'bah narrated it in "Tuhaf al-'Uqul"⁸⁷ as a cut off narration. There is a minor difference between the two transmitters.

It is one of the noblest epistles regarding various rights. In it, the Imam mentions the rights of Allah upon mankind, the rights of oneself, and the rights of body parts such as the tongue, hearing, sight, legs, hands, stomach, and private parts. Then he mentions the rights of actions such as prayer, fasting, pilgrimage, charity, and sacrifice, which amount to fifty rights, with the last one being the right of protection.

The scholars and students of his school have narrated various honorable hadiths and rulings found in different books. Many of them have been collected by the scholar al-Majlisi in his encyclopedia titled "Bihar al-Anwar" from various sources, so refer to it for more details.

⁸⁶ Al-Khisal, pp. 564-570 in the chapter on the fifties.

⁸⁷ Tuhaf al-'Uqul, pp. 183-195.

THE FIFTH IMAM

Muhammad Ibn ‘Alī Ibn al-Husayn Abī Ja‘far
al-Bāqir

(peace be upon them)

The Splitter of knowledge

His Title

He is the fifth Imam of the Holy Household, known as Al-Baqir, and he became famous for his vast knowledge and his dissemination of it. Ibn Manzur said in Lisan al-Arab: He was given this title because he was a "baqir" (splitter) of knowledge, he knew its origins, deduced its branches, and expanded upon it.⁸⁸

Ibn Hajar said: He was named so because he was like a splitter of the earth, meaning he delved into its crevices and unearthed its treasures. Similarly, he was more apparent than the hidden treasures of knowledge and the truths of judgments, rulings, and subtle aspects that are only concealed from those whose insight is obscured or whose perception is corrupt. Therefore, he became known as "Al-Baqir" (the splitter), the one who splits and reveals his knowledge.⁸⁹

Ibn Kathir said: Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, known as Al-Baqir, was named so because of his vast knowledge and his ability to derive judgments. He was known for his remembrance of Allah, humility, and patience. He was from the lineage of prophethood, noble in descent and high in status. He was knowledgeable about the hidden dangers, shed many tears, and showed aversion to disputes and arguments.⁹⁰

Ibn Khallikan said: Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Zain al-Abidin, known as Al-Baqir, was one of the twelve Imams according to the belief of the Imami Shia. He was the father of Ja'far al-Sadiq. Al-Baqir was a great scholar and a noble leader. He was called Al-Baqir because he excelled (baqara) in knowledge, as a poet said:

O Baqir of knowledge for the pious ones,

*And the best of those who have walked upon the earth.*⁹¹

His Prophetic Birth and Virtues

He was born in Medina on the first day of Rajab, in the year 57 AH, or it was said 56 AH. He passed away on the seventh of Dhu al-Hijjah, in the year 114 AH, at the age of 57. He lived

⁸⁸ Lisan al-Arab 4/74.

⁸⁹ Al-Sawa'iq al-Muhriqah 201.

⁹⁰ Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah 9/309.

⁹¹ Wafayat al-A'yan 4/174.

with his grandfather, Imam Husayn (peace be upon him), for four years, and with his father, (peace be upon him), after his grandfather for thirty-nine years. The duration of his Imamate, may peace be upon him, was eighteen years.⁹²

The texts indicating his Imamate from his father and ancestors, as mentioned by our scholars, are extensively narrated by Al-Kulayni and others.

Ibn Saad said: Muhammad al-Baqir was from the third generation of the Tabi'in from Medina. He was a knowledgeable and pious worshiper. The Imams Abu Hanifa and others narrated from him.

Abu Yusuf said: I said to Abu Hanifa, "Did you meet Muhammad ibn Ali al-Baqir?" He replied, "Yes, and I once asked him 'Does Allah intend sins?'" He said, "Does He will to overpower someone?" Abu Hanifa said, "I have never seen a more embarrassing answer than his."

Ata' said: I have not seen the scholars, when they were with anyone younger than them in knowledge, as they were with Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him). It is as if I saw Al-Hakam being defeated by him, referring to Al-Hakam ibn Ayyinah. He was a noble and distinguished scholar in his time.

Al-Mada'ini mentioned: Jabir ibn Abdullah reported that Abu Ja'far Muhammad ibn Ali came to him when he was young. Jabir said to him, "The Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, sends his greetings to you." Jabir was asked, "How is this possible?" He replied, "I was sitting with the Messenger of Allah, and Al-Husayn was in his lap, playing with him. The Messenger of Allah said, 'O Jabir, a child will be born, named Ali. When the Day of Resurrection comes, a caller will announce, 'Let the master of the worshippers rise,' and his [Husayn's] son will rise with him. Then he will have a son named Muhammad. If you meet him, Jabir, convey my greetings to him.'"

Ibn As-Sabbagh Al-Maliki mentioned after narrating the story: The Prophet, peace be upon him and his progeny, said to Jabir, "If you meet him (Muhammad ibn Ali al-Baqir), know that your remaining time in this world is short." Jabir lived for only three days after that. Then he

⁹² "I'lam al-Wara bi-A'lam al-Huda" 264-265.

said, 'This is one of the virtues that remains on the passage of days, and it is a virtue acknowledged by both the select and the general public.'⁹³

Al-Mufid said: None of the descendants of Hasan and Husayn (peace be upon them) has shown in the knowledge of religion, traditions, Sunnah, knowledge of the Quran, biography, and arts of literature what Abu Ja'far al-Baqir (peace be upon him) has shown.⁹⁴

And from him the sciences of religion were conveyed by the remnants of the companions, the Tabi'een and the Muslim scholars. His words were narrated in the accounts, and his praises were sung in poems...⁹⁵

Ibn Hajar said: His heart was pure, his knowledge and actions were righteous, his soul was purified, his character was honorable, and he spent his time in the obedience of Allah. He possessed qualities in the stations of the knowers that cannot be described adequately by the tongues of the describers. He had numerous words on conduct and knowledge that cannot be comprehended in haste.⁹⁶

His Debates and Wisdom

As for his debates with opponents, they were reported without any hesitation. Al-Tabrisi compiled them in the book "Al-Ihtijaj"⁹⁷

Al-Mufid stated in Al-Irshad: It has been reported that Nafi' ibn Al-Azraq⁹⁸ came to Muhammad ibn Ali and sat in front of him, asking him about matters of what is permissible and what is forbidden.

Abu Ja'far said to him in the course of his speech: Say to these deviants, "How did you justify separating from the Commander of the Faithful, while you shed your blood in front of him in obedience to him and seeking nearness to Allah through supporting him?" They will say

⁹³ Ibn Al-Jawzi: "Tadhkirat al-Khawass," 302-303, "Al-Fusul al-Muhimma," 215-216.

⁹⁴ Al-Irshad, 262.

⁹⁵ Al-Fusul Al-Muhimma 210, taken from al-Irshad of Sheikh Al-Mufid 261.

⁹⁶ Al-Sawa'iq Al-Muhriqah 301.

⁹⁷ Al-Ihtijaj 2/54-69, printed in Najaf.

⁹⁸ Al-Irshad 265, and perhaps the person referred to in the debates is Abdullah ibn Nafi' ibn Al-Azraq, because Nafi' was killed in the year 65 of the Hijra and at that time, the Imam was less than ten years old. Ibn Shahrashoub also recorded some of the Imam's debates with Abdullah ibn Nafi'. See Al-Muhriqa 4/201.

to you, "He issued a ruling based on the religion of Allah." So say to them, "Allah, the Most High, has indeed commanded two men from His creation to issue rulings. He said, ***'Send an arbitrator from his people and an arbitrator from her people. If they both desire reconciliation, Allāh will cause it between them'*** [4:35] And the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, appointed Sa'd ibn Mu'adh as an arbitrator over the Banu Qurayza and ruled in accordance with what Allah had revealed. Did you not know that the Commander of the Faithful commanded the judges to rule according to the Qur'an and not to exceed it? He stipulated the rejection of anything that contradicted the Qur'an in matters concerning individuals. When they said to him, 'You ruled against yourself based on the ruling against you?' He said, 'I did not make any created being an arbitrator. Verily, I made the Qur'an the arbitrator.' So where do you find the deviant misleading, when he commanded the ruling by the Qur'an and stipulated the rejection of anything that contradicted it, if not due to their involvement in their innovation and slander?" Nafi' ibn Al-Azraq said, "By Allah, this is a speech that I have never heard before, nor has it ever crossed my mind, and it is the truth, if Allah wills."

Furthermore, the Imami Shia have taken many legal rulings from him and his righteous son Ja'far al-Sadiq, according to the established order in jurisprudential books. Many jurisprudential narrations covering various aspects of life have been reported from him - peace be upon him. To find out more about this, refer to the different books of jurisprudence and their encyclopedias.

As for what has been narrated from him regarding judgments and sermons, Abu Nu'aym al-Isfahani reported them in "Hilyat al-Awliya," and Al-Hasan bin Sha'ba al-Harrani in his book "Tuhaf"⁹⁹

Imam Muhammad Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) passed away in the year 114 AH and was buried next to his father's grave in Al-Baqi'. If one wishes to research the chapters of his life in various fields, they should refer to the encyclopedias available in public and private libraries.

⁹⁹ Hilyat Al-Awliya 3/180-235, and in some of what was transmitted, reflection and contemplation are required. Hasan ibn Ali ibn Sha'ba also mentioned them in Tuhaf Al-'Uqul 284-300.

THE SIXTH IMAM

Ja'far Ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq

(peace be upon them both)

The Truthful

His birth, virtues and description by contemporaries

He is the sixth Imam from the pure household of Ahl al-Bayt - may Allah be pleased with all of them. He was titled as "Al-Sadiq" (the Truthful) due to his truthfulness in speech, and his virtues are too numerous to mention. He was born in the year 80 AH and passed away in the year 148 AH. He was buried in Al-Baqi' cemetery next to the graves of his father Muhammad al-Baqir, his grandfather Ali Zain al-Abidin, and his great-granduncle Hasan ibn Ali - may Allah be pleased with all of them. How honorable and noble is the place where he rests.¹⁰⁰

Mohammed bin Talha said: He is among the great figures and leaders of Ahl al-Bayt, possessing vast knowledge, abundant worship, clear asceticism, and extensive recitation. He followed the meanings of the Noble Qur'an, extracted its pearls from its sea, deduced its wonders, and allocated his time to various acts of obedience, holding himself accountable for them. His vision reminds one of the Hereafter, and listening to his words makes one detached from the worldly life. Following his guidance leads to Paradise. The radiance of his virtues testifies that he is from the lineage of Prophethood, and the purity of his actions affirms that he is from the offspring of the Message. Many prominent scholars and dignitaries, such as Yahya bin Sa'id al-Ansari, Ibn Jurayj, Malik bin Anas, Al-Thawri, Ibn 'Ayyinah, Abu Hanifa, Shu'bah, Abu Ayyub al-Sajistani, and others, narrated from him, acquiring honorable positions and virtues through it.¹⁰¹

Abu al-Qasim al-Baghar mentioned in the Musnad of Abu Hanifa: Al-Hasan bin Ziyad reported: I heard Abu Hanifa being asked, "Who is the most knowledgeable person you have seen?" He replied, "Ja'far bin Muhammad. When Al-Mansur called him, he sent for me and said, 'O Abu Hanifa, people have been tested with Ja'far ibn Muhammad, so prepare for me some difficult questions from your knowledge.' So, I prepared forty questions for him and then I was sent to Abu Ja'far, who was in al-Hira, and I went to him.

I entered upon him, and Ja'far was sitting to his right. When I looked at him, I felt a sense of awe from Ja'far that I had never felt from Abu Ja'far. I greeted him, and he gestured for me to sit down. Then he turned to him and said, 'O Abu Abdullah, this is Abu Hanifa.' He said, 'Yes, I

¹⁰⁰ Wafayat al-A'yan 1/327, Biography Number 31.

¹⁰¹ Kashf al-Ghummah 2/368, including Ayub al-Sakhtiyani. And it is correct what we have mentioned.

know him.' Then he turned to me and said, 'O Abu Hanifa, present your questions to Abu Abdullah.' So, I started asking him the questions, and he would respond by saying, 'You say this, the people of Medina say this, and we say this. Sometimes we follow them, sometimes they follow us, and sometimes we all differ.' Until I presented the forty questions, and there was nothing missing from them.' Then Abu Hanifa said, 'Isn't it that the most knowledgeable among people is the one who knows their differences?'¹⁰²

From Malik ibn Anas: Ja'far ibn Muhammad was described to me during a certain period as possessing three qualities: either he was praying, or fasting, or reciting the Quran. I have never seen anyone superior to Jafar ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq in knowledge, worship, and piety. No eye has seen, no ear has heard, and no human heart has conceived anyone better than Ja'far ibn Muhammad al-Sadiq in terms of knowledge, worship and piety.¹⁰³

And Abu Bahr al-Jahiz (despite his animosity towards the Ahl al-Bayt) said: Jafar ibn Muhammad filled the world with his knowledge and understanding. It is said that Abu Hanifa and Sufyan al-Thawri were among his students. They should be enough for you in this matter.¹⁰⁴

As for his virtues and qualities, they are countless, and their types are beyond comprehension. He possessed acute insight, to the extent that due to the abundance of his overflowing knowledge, his heart was overwhelmed by the conflicts of piety. Thus, he acquired rulings whose reasons were not grasped, and he possessed knowledge that the intellects fell short of comprehending. Such virtues and qualities are attributed to him and narrated about him.¹⁰⁵

Ibn al-Sabbagh al-Maliki said: Jafar al-Sadiq, peace be upon him, was among his brothers the successor of his father, his guardian, and the one who would assume the Imamate after him. He stood out among the people with virtue, and his remembrance was the most profound, and his status the highest. People learned from him sciences that led them forward, and his reputation

¹⁰² Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 47, pp. 217-218. Asad Haydar: Al-Imam Al-Sadiq wa al-Madahib al-Arba'a, Vol. 4, p. 335, cited from Manaqib Abu Hanifa by Al-Makki, Vol. 1, p. 173, and Jami' Masanid Abu Hanifa, Vol. 1, p. 252, and Tadhkirat al-Huffaz by Al-Dhahabi, Vol. 1, p. 157.

¹⁰³ Asad Haydar: Al-Imam al-Sadiq, vol. 1, p. 53, quoting from Al-Tahdhib, vol. 2, p. 104, and Al-Majalis al-Suniyyah, vol. 5.

¹⁰⁴ Asad Haydar: Al-Imam al-Sadiq, vol. 1, p. 55, quoting from Rasail al-Jahiz, p. 106.

¹⁰⁵ Kashf al-Ghummah, vol. 2, p. 368.

and mention spread throughout the lands. Scholars have not transmitted from anyone from his family what they have transmitted from him in terms of narrations.

If you follow the books of history, biographies, and chronicles, you will find many statements and similar expressions, all indicating the consensus of the ummah on his leadership in knowledge and spiritual guidance. They differed, however, regarding whether he was an appointed Imam by Allah Almighty. The Shia rely on the numerous mass-transmitted narrations mentioned in this regard.¹⁰⁶

His mission, success and context

The era of Imam Al-Sadiq - peace be upon him - extended from the end of the caliphate of Abdul Malik ibn Marwan to the middle of the caliphate of Al-Mansur Al-Dawaniqi, from the year 83 AH to the year 148 AH. He witnessed a significant part of the Umayyad era and lived during the reign of many of their kings. He witnessed the harshest forms of their rule. He spent his early life until the age of eleven with his grandfather Zain al-Abidin, and until his thirty-second year with his father Al-Baqir. He grew up under their guidance, nourishing his teachings and developing his talents, receiving a religious upbringing. He emerged from that comprehensive school and, after the death of his father, assumed leadership in the year 114 AH. His school expanded with the activities of the scientific movement in Medina, Mecca, Kufa, and other Islamic regions.

The mentioned era, during which the Imam lived, was characterized by the emergence of intellectual movements and the influx of strange doctrinal opinions into the Islamic community, the most important of which was the destructive extremist [ghulāt] movement. Their heads aspired in that turbulent storm to spread the spirit of division among Muslims. Their ideas were nurtured in that era to carry out the task of advocating for their principles that Islam had eliminated. They seized the opportunity to spread these corrupt opinions in the Islamic community, spreading false narrations and attributing them to the bearers of knowledge from the family of Muhammad, in order to deceive the general public. Al-Mughira ibn Sa'id claimed to have contact with Abu Ja'far Al-Baqir and narrated fabricated narrations from him. The Imam

¹⁰⁶ Check al-Kafi, vol. 1, pp. 306-307.

Al-Sadiq - peace be upon him - denounced his lies and disassociated himself from him. He provided his companions with a criterion for accepting narrations attributed to him, saying: "Do not accept a narration from us unless it conforms to the Qur'an and the Sunnah, or you find supporting evidence from our earlier narrations."

Furthermore, the Imam guided the Ummah to the right path during an era of conflicting opinions and ideas, and a war ignited between the Umayyads and their opponents from the Abbasids. In those difficult and harsh circumstances, the Imam took advantage of the opportunity to spread the narrations of his grandfather and the knowledge of his forefathers, which guided the masses. He nurtured thousands of scholars and jurists under his guidance. The scholars of Hadith compiled the names of narrators from him, who were reliable, despite their differing opinions and views, and they numbered four thousand men.¹⁰⁷ This was a distinguishing characteristic of Imam Al-Sadiq - peace be upon him - compared to other Imams.

Indeed, the Imam - peace be upon him - authorized narrating from his grandfather and ancestors when the Muslims rushed to record the traditions of the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, after the neglect that lasted until the year 143 AH.¹⁰⁸ At that time, authentic hadiths were mixed with weak ones, and numerous Isra'iliyat and fabricated narratives seeped into the Sunnah, concocted by the enemies of Islam, including the Crusaders and the Majoos, in addition to fabrications and distortions by the scholars of authority and the Umayyad court mercenaries.

From this perspective, the Imam - peace be upon him - found that the matter of the Prophetic Sunnah had started to take dangerous directions and clear deviations. Therefore, he truly took it upon himself to confront this dangerous phenomenon, refute alien opinions about Islam, many of which infiltrated as a result of intellectual and theological interaction between Muslims and others.

That period posed a serious challenge to the existence of the Prophetic Sunnah and led to a blatant mixture in many beliefs. Thus, the Imam - peace be upon him - was truly the vessel of salvation from this difficult battle.

¹⁰⁷ Al-Irshad 270 and Al-Manaqib by Ibn Shahrashoub 4/257.

¹⁰⁸ "Tarikh al-Khulafa" by al-Suyuti, the caliphate of al-Mansur al-Dawaniqi. He specified the date of recording as the year 143 AH.

The Lantern of Guidance

The knowledge of the Ahl al-Bayt - peace be upon them - is inherited from their grandfather, the Chosen One, Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, who received it from Allah Almighty through the trustworthy Jibril - peace be upon him. Therefore, it is not surprising to find the Ummah finding its lost path in them - peace be upon them - and finding a haven of safety in these great sources. During that time, when everything spoken was mixed with fabrications, falsehoods, weak and forged symbols, or confused chains of transmission, you find that the truthful Imam - peace be upon him - says, "My hadith is the hadith of my father, and my father's hadith is the hadith of my grandfather, and my grandfather's hadith is the hadith of Ali ibn Abi Talib, and the hadith of Ali is the hadith of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family, and the hadith of the Messenger of Allah is the speech of Allah, the Almighty."

However, what is astonishing is to find someone turning away from the lighthouse of Prophethood to individuals who were known to be hostile to Islam and its people. This is a mark of shame and a clear shortcoming that cannot be excused, especially in the case of Sahih al-Bukhari.

For example, Imam al-Bukhari narrates and cites people like Marwan ibn al-Hakam, Imran ibn Hittan, Hariz ibn Uthman al-Rahbi, and others, while neglecting the narration from the Imam al-Sadiq - peace be upon him.

Regarding the first one: he is the lizard, the son of the lizard, the accursed son of the accursed, according to the words of the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him. As for the second one: it is the well-known kharijite who praised Ibn Muljam for his poetry, not his intelligence. As for the third one: he used to belittle Ali and criticize him, and I do not know why this is the case; it is just a question.

Indeed, Imam Al-Sadiq has a vast collection of traditions and rulings attributed to him, surpassing tens of thousands. He engaged in debates with heretics and atheists of his time, as well as ascetics from the Sufi sect. Many scholars have verified and documented these traditions, which in themselves are an intellectual treasure left by the Imam, peace be upon him. As for the

narration of traditions attributed to him, Aban ibn Taghlib alone has narrated thirty thousand traditions.

Even Hasan ibn Ali Al-Washa' said: "I have encountered nine hundred scholars in this mosque (Al-Kufa Mosque), each of whom said: Ja'far ibn Muhammad narrated to me."¹⁰⁹

As for what has been transmitted from his knowledge and beliefs, it can be discussed without any objection, and we cannot convey even a little of them, so whoever desires can refer to its sources.¹¹⁰

Sayyid Amir Ali says after discussing the sectarian and philosophical differences in the Imam's era: "The religious opinions did not adopt a philosophical approach except during the Fatimids. This is because the spread of knowledge at that time unleashed the spirit of inquiry and investigation, and philosophical discussions became common in all societies. It is worth mentioning that the leadership of that intellectual movement was found in the school that flourished in Medina, established by the grandson of Ali ibn Abi Talib, known as Imam Ja'far Al-Sadiq. He was a diligent man and a great thinker with extensive knowledge of the sciences of that era, and he is considered the first to establish major philosophical schools in Islam. Not only those who later established the jurisprudential schools attended his lectures, but also philosophers and philosophy students from various regions attended. Imam Al-Hasan Al-Basri was the founder of the philosophical school in the city of Basra, and Wasil ibn Ata was the founder of the Mu'tazila school among his disciples, who drew knowledge from his abundant resources. Wasil and Imam Al-Alawi were known for their advocacy of human free will..."¹¹¹

His Wisdom

As for his judgments and concise words, they are considered intellectual treasures. As for his letters, many of them exist, such as his letter to al-Najashi, the governor of Ahwaz. Among them is his letter on the precepts of religion, which was transmitted by Al-Saduq in Al-Khisal,

¹⁰⁹ "Al-Rijal" by al-Najashi, 139, number 79.

¹¹⁰ Al-Ihtijaj 2/69-155 and Al-Tawhid by Al-Saduq, and he elaborated on various topics.

¹¹¹ Mukhtasar Tarikh al-Arab, translated by Afeef al-Baalbaki, p. 193.

and his letter to Mufaddal ibn 'Umar on Tawhid, and other letters that he wrote in his own handwriting.¹¹²

From his extensive advice and words of wisdom, we extract one particular advice, which is his advice to Sufyan al-Thawri:

"Stopping at every doubt is better than plunging into destruction, and leaving a narration you haven't heard¹¹³ is better than narrating a Hadith you haven't verified. Every right has a truth, and every correctness has light. Take what agrees with the Book of Allah and leave what contradicts it."¹¹⁴

And we conclude this research with what Abu Zahra said in this field:

Imam al-Sadiq has the virtue of precedence, and he has a special virtue over the elders. Abu Hanifa used to narrate from him and considered him the most knowledgeable person among the people's differences and the widest in encompassing jurisprudence. Imam Malik used to refer to him as a student and narrator, and he had the virtue of being his teacher over Abu Hanifa alone, considering that as a virtue.

On top of that, he is the descendant of Ali Zain al-Abidin, who was the leader of the people of Medina in his time, with virtue, honor, religion, and knowledge. Ibn Shihab al-Zuhri studied under him, as did many of the Tabi'un. He is the son of Muhammad al-Baqir, who excelled in knowledge and reached the peak of it. He is one of those whom Allah honored with personal excellence and additional honor due to his noble lineage, Hashemite kinship, and the lineage of Muhammad (peace be upon him).¹¹⁵

And as written by Professor Assad Hayder when he said:

To him used to come students of schools of knowledge and hadith narrators from distant regions to alleviate the burden and lack of caution. Kufa, Basra, Wasit, and the Hijaz sent [students] to Ja'far ibn Muhammad, the backbone of these regions, and from every tribe among Bani Asad, Makhariq, Tayy, Sulaym, Ghatafan, Ghafar, Azd, Khuzayah, Khath'am, Makhzum,

¹¹² The names of these letters were compiled by Sayyid al-Amin in A'yan al-Shi'ah 1/668.

¹¹³ Meaning, a hadith that has not been heard through an authentic source, and the verb is passive.

¹¹⁴ Al-Ya'qoubi, Al-Tarikh, Vol. 3, p. 115.

¹¹⁵ Muhammad Abu Zahra: Imam al-Sadiq, p. 30.

and Bani Dibah, and from Quraysh, especially the Banu Harith bin Abdul-Muttalib and the Banu Hasan bin Hasan bin Ali.¹¹⁶

When the Imam died, his Shi'a and the general public of the city mourned him, and he was carried to al-Baqi' and buried beside his father and grandfather - may peace be upon them. Abu Hurairah al-Ajali composed the following verses about him:

I say, as they carried him,

Upon the shoulders of his bearers,

Do you know what you carry to the grave?

A heavy burden, a noble, towering head, lying still.

In the morning, the mourners gathered around his tomb,

Dust and tears were above the parting.

May Allah's peace be upon him on the day he was born, the day he died, and the day he will be resurrected alive.

¹¹⁶ Assad Hayder: Imam al-Sadiq, Vol. 1, p. 38, citing Kitab Jafar ibn Muhammad by Sayyid al-Ahl.

THE SEVENTH IMAM

Musa Ibn Ja'far Abul Hasan al-Kadhim

(peace be upon them both)

The Forbearing

Al-Kadhim is the seventh Imam of the pure household of Ahl al-Bayt. He was born in al-Abwa', between Mecca and Medina, on Sunday, 7th Safar, 128 AH. He was martyred by poison in the prison of Al-Rashid in the year 183 AH and was buried in Baghdad on the western side of the well-known cemetery called the Quraish graveyards, which is now known as Al-Kadhimiya.

He - peace be upon him - was a role model of his time, unique in his era, of great value and high status. He had a majestic appearance, devoted to worship, spending his nights praying and his days fasting. He had great patience and tolerance, to the extent that he was named Al-Kadhim (the one who suppresses his anger). He faced hardships that made the mountains sigh in awe, but not a single trace of distress appeared on him. Instead, he - peace be upon him - remained patient and resigned, just like his forefathers - peace be upon them.

He was known by several names, including Al-Abd al-Salih (the righteous servant), Al-Kadhim, Al-Sabir (the patient), and Al-Amin (the trustworthy).

Ibn al-Sabbagh reported from Abdul Alaa that Al-Fayd bin Al-Mukhtar said: I said to Abu Abdullah Ja'far Al-Sadiq - peace be upon him -: "Please, take my hand out of fire. Who is for us after you (leave this world)?" Then Musa Al-Kadhim entered, and he was still a young boy at that time, and Al-Sadiq said, "This is your companion, so hold on to him."¹¹⁷

Al-Shaykh Al-Mufid said: He is the Imam after his father, and he is preferred over all his sons due to the convergence of virtues in him, the authenticity of the narrations, and the clarity of the statements from his father that he is his successor and the Imam who will rise after him.¹¹⁸

He assumed the position of imamate after his father, Al-Sadiq - peace be upon him - at a time when the Abbasid state witnessed the stability of its pillars and the firmness of its structure. It rejected the slogan that it used to call for, which was the call for the family of Muhammad - peace be upon him and his family. Instead, it turned to the rightful heir of the prophetic tree, brandishing the sword of enmity against him and his Shia, in an attempt to prevent the growth of

¹¹⁷ Al-Fusool al-Muhimma, 231

¹¹⁸ Al-Kafi, 1/307-311; Athbat al-Hudat, 3/156-170, where 60 narrations on his Imamate were mentioned.

his influence and protect their own state. However, Imam Al-Kadhim - peace be upon him - witnessed various forms of oppression and harassment throughout his life, but that did not prevent him - peace be upon him - from fulfilling his mission in protecting the religion and leading the nation. Muslims recognized him as a symbol of knowledge and bravery, an everlasting source of patience, generosity, and nobility, and an extraordinary example of devotion, asceticism, and fear of God Almighty.

His Virtues mentioned by His contemporaries

There are many narrations about his noble biography, and researchers and scholars have dedicated numerous works to the biography of this great Imam, which exceeds our scope here in this limited space. However, in these pages, we will attempt to highlight selected aspects of that noble biography:

1. Al-Khatib narrated in Tarikh Baghdad with his chain of narrators, saying: Harun al-Rashid performed Hajj and visited the grave of the Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - and with him were members of the Quraysh tribe, including Musa ibn Ja'far. When he approached the grave, he said, "Peace be upon you, O Messenger of Allah, O my cousin," expressing his pride to those around him. Then, Musa ibn Ja'far approached and said, "Peace be upon you, O father." The face of al-Rashid changed, and he said, "This honor, O Abu al-Hasan, is truly yours."¹¹⁹

2. Al-Zamakhshari mentioned in Rabi' al-Abrar: Harun used to say to Musa ibn Ja'far, "O Abu al-Hasan, take Fadak¹²⁰ so that I may return it to you." Musa refused until Harun insisted, so he said, "I will not take it except with its borders." Harun asked, "What are its borders?" Musa replied, "O Amir al-Mu'minin, if I define its borders, you will not return it." Harun said, "By the

¹¹⁹ Wafayat al-A'yan, 5/309.

¹²⁰ It is a village in the Hijaz, two days away from Medina, and it is said to be three days. Allah blessed His Messenger (peace be upon him and his progeny) with its settlement in the seventh year of the Hijra, and the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) gave it to his daughter Fatimah al-Zahra, the Lady of the Women of the Worlds (peace be upon her). She owned it during her lifetime and benefited from its blessings. However, Abu Bakr deprived her of it, which angered Fatimah al-Zahra, and she argued with him about this matter, but he refused. Thus, Fadak remained in this manner until it was returned by the Umayyad caliph Umar ibn Abdul Aziz to the children of Fatimah (peace be upon her). Then it was taken from them by Yazid ibn Abd al-Malik, and it remained in the hands of the Umayyads until the Abbasids took power. Al-Saffah, the Butcher, handed it over to al-Hasan ibn al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Abi Talib, then it was taken by al-Mansur, and his son al-Mahdi returned it. Then it was taken by Musa al-Hadi until al-Ma'mun took it back from them.

right of your grandfather, I will do so." Musa said, "As for the first border, it is Aden." Harun's face changed and he said, "Huh?" Musa continued, "And the second border is Samarkand." So his face became red. Musa added, "And the third border is Africa." So his face became black and he said, "Eh!?" Musa concluded, "And the fourth is the coastline extending from the Khazars to Armenia." Al-Rashid said, "In this case we have nothing left! Come and take my seat instead!" Musa, peace be upon him, said, "I have informed you that if I define its borders, you will not return it." At that point, he resolved to kill him.¹²¹

3. He used to pray the voluntary prayers of the night and conclude them with the morning prayer. Then he would continue to supplicate to Allah, not raising his head from supplication and praise until the sun rose, and he used to supplicate frequently, saying: "O Allah, I ask You for ease at the time of death and forgiveness at the time of accountability," and he would repeat that. And one of his supplications - peace be upon him - was: "O Allah, forgive the great sins of Your servant and grant good forgiveness from You." He used to weep out of fear of Allah to the extent that his beard would become wet with tears. He used to take care of his family and show mercy to them. He would visit the poor of the city at night and carry to them a bag containing flour, dates, lentils, and dates. He would deliver it to them, and they would not know where it came from.¹²²

4. In the book "Tuhaf al-'Uqul" by al-Hasan ibn 'Ali ibn Shu'bah, Abu Hanifa said: "I performed Hajj during the days of Abu 'Abdullah al-Sadiq - peace be upon him. When I arrived in Medina, I entered his house and sat in the corridor, waiting for his permission. Then a young boy came out, and I said, 'O boy, where does a stranger relieve himself in your land?' The boy turned to him and said to him: 'Slowly!' Then he sat down politely, leaned against the wall, and began to give him an answer to his question, saying: 'Avoid the banks of rivers, the places where fruit fall, the courtyards of mosques, and the middle of a road. Loosen your garment and hide yourself behind a wall; you should not face the qibla (direction to the Kaaba) nor have your back towards it; and relieve nature where you wish.' I was amazed by what I heard from the boy, so I asked him, 'What is your name?' He said, 'I am Musa ibn Ja'far ibn Muhammad ibn 'Ali ibn al-Husayn ibn 'Ali ibn Abi Talib.' I said to him, 'O boy, who bears the sin?' He replied, 'Evils fall

¹²¹ Rabi' al-Abrar 1/315.

¹²² Al-Mufid: Al-Irshad 296.

into one of three categories: either they are from Allah and not from the servant, so it is not fitting for the Lord to punish the servant for what he did not commit; or they are from Him and from the servant, but that is not the case, since it is not appropriate for the powerful partner to oppress the weak partner; or they are from the servant - and they are his own - so if He forgives, it is due to His grace and generosity, and if He punishes, it is because of the servant's sin and his wrongdoing." Abu Hanifa said: "I left and did not meet Abu 'Abdullah, and I was content with what I heard." Ibn Shahrashoub narrated something similar in his book "Al-Manaqib," except that he said, "Hide yourself behind a wall, and avoid the eyes of the neighbor." He also said, "When I heard this statement from him, it became noble in my eyes and great in my heart." And at the end of the narration, he said, "I said, *'Offspring, one of the other.'*"¹²³ [3:34]

5. Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani narrated: Yahya ibn Al-Hasan said: Whenever Musa ibn Ja'far heard something unfavorable about a man, he would send him a bag of golden dinars as a gift. The amount in the bag ranged between three hundred and two hundred dinars, thus Musa's generosity became well-known. Yahya continued: There was a man from the family of 'Umar ibn Al-Khattab who used to insult Ali ibn Abi Talib whenever he saw Musa ibn Ja'far and would harm him when they met. So, some of his companions and followers said to him, "Let us kill him." Musa replied, "No." Then he [the Imam] rode on to him until he reached him on one of his farms, entering therein without dismounting from his donkey. He [the Umari] angrily shouted, "Do not trample our crops!" However, the man did not pay attention to him and approached until he reached his location. He sat with him smiling and asked him, "How much did you spend on these [now ruined] crops of yours?" He replied, "One hundred dirhams." Musa asked, "How much profit do you hope to make?" He replied, "I don't know." Musa insisted, "I asked you how much you hope." He replied, "Another hundred." Musa then handed him three hundred dinars as a gift. The man stood up and kissed his head. After that, when he entered the mosque, the Umari would stand up and greet him, saying, "Allah knows best where He places His message." From then on, whenever Musa entered, the man would come out, greet him, and stand up for him. Musa said to his companions, who had sought to kill the man, "What resulted in a better outcome, what you intended or what I intended?"¹²⁴

¹²³ Tuhuf al-'Uqul, p. 303; Al-Manaqib by Ibn Shahrashoub, vol. 4, p. 314.

¹²⁴ Maqatil al-Talibiyyin 499-500, Tarikh Baghdad 28.

6. It is narrated that Al-Rashid once asked him, "Why do you allow people to attribute you as the progeny of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), while you are the progeny of Ali? Isn't a man attributed to his grandfather through his father rather than his grandfather through his mother?" Al-Kadhim, peace be upon him, replied, "I seek refuge in Allah from Satan, the accursed. In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful: ***'And among his descendants were David, Solomon, Job, Joseph, Moses, Aaron. Thus, We reward the doers of good. And Zechariah, John, Jesus, and Elias...' [6:84]*** Isa (Jesus) doesn't have a father, but he is connected to the lineage of the prophets through his mother. Similarly, we are connected to the lineage of the Prophet through our mother, Fatimah Al-Zahra. And there is an additional proof, O Amir al-Mu'minin. Allah the Almighty said, ***'So whoever disputes with you concerning him after [all] knowledge has come to you, say, 'Come, let us call our sons and your sons, our women and your women, ourselves and yourselves, then supplicate earnestly [together]...' [3:61]*** And the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, did not call anyone other than Ali, Fatimah, Al-Hasan, and Al-Husayn for the Mubahala with the Christians."¹²⁵

His imprisonment

As for his knowledge and the discussions about him, scholars have narrated from him in the fields of knowledge to the extent that it fills books, and he was known among the narrators for his knowledge. People have narrated from him extensively, and he was the most knowledgeable and the most memorizing of the people of his time regarding the Book of Allah.¹²⁶

Historians unanimously agree that Harun al-Rashid arrested Imam Al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) and imprisoned him for many years, with strict surveillance and confinement by his guards.

Ibn Kathir said: "When the imprisonment of Imam Al-Kadhim (peace be upon him) was prolonged, he wrote to al-Rashid, saying: 'Now then, O Commander of the Faithful, no day of

¹²⁵ Al-Fusul Al-Muhimma 238.

¹²⁶ Al-Mufid: Al-Irshad 298, and note aspects of his wisdom and advice in Al-Kafi 1/13-20 and Tuhuf al-Uqul 283.

calamity has passed over me except that it was a day of prosperity for you, until this leads us to a day when the followers of falsehood will lose""¹²⁷

The Imam (peace be upon him) continued to be transferred from one prison to another until the matter reached the prison of Sindi ibn Shahik¹²⁸, who was wicked and immoral, not hesitating to do anything to flatter and appease the Sultan. He exceeded the limits in the imprisonment of the Imam (peace be upon him) and increased his restrictions until the order came from al-Rashid to poison Al-Kadhim (peace be upon him). Sindi hastened to carry out this great order, and the Imam (peace be upon him) was martyred after a long period of imprisonment and suffering in the year 183 AH.

When Al-Rashid received him, he imprisoned him under Al-Fadl ibn Al-Rabi' in Baghdad, where he stayed for a long time. Then he wrote to him to hand him over to Al-Fadl ibn Yahya, so he took him from him. He asked him to assassinate the Imam as he had asked Isa ibn Ja'far, but he did not do so. Instead, he honored the Imam and showed respect towards him. When Al-Rashid learned of this, he ordered him to be flogged a hundred lashes. Then he took the Imam from him and handed him over to Al-Sindi ibn Shahik, may Allah curse him. Thus, the blessed life of the Imam ended at the hands of this wicked man.

Since Al-Rashid feared the reaction of the Muslims upon the spread of the news of the Imam's martyrdom, he resorted to a deceitful trick to distance himself from the consequences of this tragic event. Abu Al-Faraj Al-Isfahani and others¹²⁹ have mentioned that when Imam Al-Kadhim died from being poisoned, the jurists and prominent figures of the people of Baghdad, including Haitham ibn 'Adi and others, were brought in to witness that he died a natural death and that Al-Rashid and his accomplices had no part in it. Once they testified to that, his pure body was taken out and placed on a bridge in Baghdad, and the announcement of his death was made.

¹²⁷ Al-Bidayah wa al-Nihayah 10/183.

¹²⁸ Abu al-Faraj al-Isfahani mentioned in Maqatil al-Talibiyyin 502: "When al-Rashid arrested Imam Al-Kadhim (peace be upon him), he ordered to send him to Basra to be imprisoned with Isa ibn Ja'far al-Mansur, who was in Basra at that time. He was imprisoned there for a year, then he wrote to al-Rashid: 'Take him from me and deliver him to whoever you wish, otherwise, I will release him. I have tried my best to take him, but I am unable to do so. To the extent that I hear him supplicating, and he does not supplicate against me or against you. Rather, I hear him supplicating only for himself, asking Allah for mercy and forgiveness.'"

¹²⁹ Maqatil al-Talibiyyin, 504.

Peace be upon him on the day he was born, the day he was unjustly imprisoned and martyred by poisoning, and the day he will be resurrected alive.

THE EIGHTH IMAM

Ali Ibn Musa al-Ridha Abul Hasan al-Thani

(peace be upon them)

The Approved one

He is the eighth Imam from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), who assumed the position of Imamate after his father, Musa ibn Ja'far (peace be upon them), due to his excellence over the members of his household, his children, and his brothers in his era, and due to his knowledge, piety, and competence for the position of Imamate. This is in addition to the narrations that mention his rights and Imamate from his father.¹³⁰

He was born in the city in the year 148 AH and was martyred in Tus, in the land of Khorasan, in the month of Safar in the year 203 AH. He was 55 years old at that time, and the duration of his imamate after his father was 20 years.¹³¹

Al-Waqidi said: Ali ibn Musa heard Hadith from his father, his uncle, and others. He was trustworthy, issuing fatwas in the Mosque of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his progeny) at the age of twenty-one. He belonged to the eighth generation of the Tabi'in from the people of Medina.¹³²

Sheikh Kamal al-Din ibn Talha said: Through his profound observation and contemplation, he found true faith and inherited it (referring to Ali ibn Abi Talib and Ali ibn al-Husayn, peace be upon them). His faith grew, his status elevated, his influence increased, his proofs became evident. He was even included by the Caliph al-Ma'mun in his councils and entrusted him with the affairs of his caliphate. He even arranged a marriage for him with his daughter, and his virtues were elevated, his qualities were praised, his noble lineage was Hashemite, and his prophetic connection was honorable.¹³³

His Debates

Imam al-Rida (peace be upon him) lived in an era when Islamic civilization flourished. The translation of Greek, Roman, and other books increased, and skepticism about principles and beliefs arose from atheists, Jewish rabbis, Christian priests, and anthropomorphists from the people who narrate hadith.

¹³⁰ Please refer to the sources for the specific narrations, such as Al-Kafi 1/311-319 and Al-Irshad 304-305, and Athbat al-Huda 3/228, where 68 narrations are narrated about his Imamate.

¹³¹ Al-Irshad, page 304.

¹³² Ibn al-Jawzi: Tadhkirat al-Khawass 315.

¹³³ Al-Fusul al-Muhimma 343, citing Mat'alib al-Su'al.

During those times, he (peace be upon him) had the opportunity to engage in debates with opponents from various schools of thought, and his proofs and elevated status became apparent. Those who witnessed his debates and arguments bear witness to this.¹³⁴

And in order to highlight examples of his arguments, we mention the following:

Abu Qurrah, the contemporary theologian, entered upon Abu al-Hasan al-Rida - peace be upon him - and said: "We have been informed that Allah divided sight and speech to two prophets. He divided speech to Moses - peace be upon him - and sight to Muhammad, peace and blessings be upon him and his family."

Abu al-Hasan - peace be upon him - replied: "Who is informed by Allah to both the jinn and humans about *Vision perceives Him not [6:103]*, and *they cannot compass it in knowledge [20:110]*, and *there is nothing like unto Him [42:11]*. Is it not Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family?" Abu Qurrah replied: "Yes."

He - peace be upon him - continued: "So how can a man come to all of creation and inform them that he came from Allah, inviting them to Allah by the order of Allah, and then say, *Vision perceives Him not [6:103]*, and *they cannot compass it in knowledge [20:110]*, and *there is nothing like unto Him [42:11]*, and then say, 'I have seen Him with my own eyes, and I have encompassed Him with knowledge, and He is in the form of a human.' Are you not ashamed? The heretics could not use this argument against him, that he came from Allah with a command, and then he comes with something contrary from another perspective."

Abu Qurrah replied: "But he says, '*And indeed he saw him in another descent.*' [53:13]"

Abu al-Hasan - peace be upon him - said: "After this verse, it shows you what he saw, as he said, '*The heart did not lie about what it saw.*' [53:11] He means that the heart of Muhammad, peace be upon him and his family, did not lie about what his eyes saw, and then he informed about what he saw. He said, '*Indeed he has seen some of the greatest signs of his Lord.*' [53:18] So it is the signs of Allah, not Allah. And he said, *they cannot compass it in*

¹³⁴ Sheikh al-Tabrisi compiled some of these debates in his book "Al-Ihtijaj" 2/170-237, printed in Najaf.

knowledge [20:110] So if the eyes saw Him, knowledge encompassed Him, and recognition would have fallen."

Abu Qurrah asked: "So, do you deny the narration?"

Abu al-Hasan replied: "If the narration contradicts the Qur'an, I deny it. And what the Muslims unanimously agree upon is that He cannot be encompassed by knowledge, nor can He be perceived by sight, and there is nothing like unto Him."¹³⁵

His Political Position

And when the knowledge of the Imam and his virtue spread, hearts and minds were drawn towards him. In the Islamic nation, there were discerning men who could distinguish truth from falsehood. The Muslims rallied around Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) in large numbers, which prompted the Abbasid caliphate to attempt to undermine the position of the Imam and his supporters before the situation escalated and became difficult to control. Al-Ma'mun resorted to a cunning maneuver through which he managed to change the course of events in his favor. He summoned Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) and a group of Talibis to the government headquarters in Marwah, from the city [Medina] of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), honoring and glorifying them. They were accommodated near the caliphate headquarters until Al-Ma'mun met with Imam Ali ibn Musa Al-Rida (peace be upon him).

However, before their meeting, Al-Ma'mun sent a message to Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) saying, "I intend to abdicate the caliphate and bestow it upon you. What is your opinion?" Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) denied this matter and said, "I seek refuge in Allah, O Commander of the Faithful, from this statement and that anyone hears it." He replied to the message, "If you refuse what I have offered, then the succession is inevitable after me." Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) adamantly refused.

Al-Ma'mun then summoned him and brought along Al-Fadl ibn Sahl Dhul-Ri'āsatayn ("the man of the two headships"). There was no one else in the gathering except them). He said

¹³⁵ Al-Ihtijaj by At-Tabrasi, Vol. 2, p. 184.

to Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him), "I have decided to appoint you as the leader of the Muslims, relieve myself from the burden, and transfer it to you."

Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, there is no capacity or power for me to do that." Al-Ma'mun said to him, "Then I will appoint you as the Crown Prince after me." Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) said, "Release me from that, O Commander of the Faithful." Al-Ma'mun, in his words, threatened him if he refused, saying, "Umar ibn Al-Khattab established consultation among six of them, and one of them was your grandfather, the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him). He made it a condition that whoever opposed their decision should have their neck struck. It is necessary for you to accept what I ask of you, as I find no other solution."

Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) said to him, "I will agree to what you want regarding the succession, on the condition that I do not command, prohibit, issue fatwas, judge, appoint, dismiss, or change anything of what is established." Al-Ma'mun agreed to all of that.¹³⁶

I say: I am not afraid to uncover the true meaning behind Al-Ma'mun's insistence on appointing Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) as the Crown Prince. This image becomes clear when examining the events that preceded or accompanied this well-planned conspiracy.

When Harun al-Rashid presented his illiterate son, despite acknowledging and being aware of Al-Ma'mun's strong personality and intelligence, compared to his indulgent brother who only relied on his mother's position, Zubayda, in the palace of al-Rashid, it signified the beginning of the turmoil that ensued. It resulted in the deaths of tens of thousands, with Al-Amin being the main victim. The Abbasids rallied behind him and fought alongside him. When power fully shifted to Al-Ma'mun, who settled in Khorasan with the support of its people at that time, he faced the danger of the Abbasids' resentment, their hostility towards him, and their seizing of any opportune moment to attack him and his rule.

On the other hand, the Shias everywhere rejected and opposed the Abbasid Caliphate due to their misconduct and injustice towards the Alawites and the household of the Prophet, especially those Shia in Khorasan who constituted an important faction among them.

¹³⁶ Al-Irshad by Al-Mufid, p. 310.

In the first year of Al-Ma'mun's caliphate, Sari ibn Mansur al-Shaybani, known as Abi al-Saraya, emerged in Kufa, calling for the allegiance to Muhammad ibn Ibrahim ibn Isma'il ibn Al-Hasan ibn Al-Hasan ibn Ali (peace be upon him). The general public pledged their allegiance to him based on that.

In Medina, Muhammad ibn Sulayman ibn Dawud ibn Al-Hasan rose up, while in Basra, Ali ibn Muhammad ibn Jafar ibn Ali ibn Al-Husayn and Zayd ibn Musa ibn Jafar, also known as Zayd al-Ghar, took action. In Yemen, Ibrahim ibn Musa came forward. Additionally, Hasan ibn Al-Husayn ibn Ali ibn Al-Husayn, known as Al-Aftas, also appeared in Medina.

Thus, numerous uprisings erupted across the state, supported by thousands of people who had experienced the oppression and tyranny of the despots.

Al-Ma'mun realized the extent of the crisis and the weakening of the government's position at that time. He had no choice but to show his compliance in front of the Shia public's opinion - one of the most powerful forces capable of overthrowing the Abbasid Caliphate, without a doubt. He had to relinquish the caliphate - for which he had even killed his brother - to Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him), the Imam of the Shia and their leader.

And thus, after the acceptance of Ali ibn Musa al-Rida (peace be upon him) of the succession, he summoned the orators and poets before him. The banners fluttered over his head, and among those who responded to him from the poets was Di'bil ibn Ali al-Khuza'i. When he entered, he said to him, "I recited a poem and made it a rule not to recite it to anyone before you." He commanded him to sit until his assembly settled, then he said to him, "Recite it." Di'bil recited his well-known poem:

Academies of Signs, of rehearsers detained

Revelation's home, in barren terrains

Of the Prophet's kin, in Khayf at Mina

Abodes of 'Ali, Al-Husayn, and Ja'far

And Hamza and Sajjad: of callus in prayer

Abodes that the tyrants will only eschew

But time's vicissitudes will always renew

Until he said:

Do you not see me for the past thirty years

Day and night roaming, constantly drear?

I see their estate to others acquired

While left are their hands of it as ciphers

If for their murder they seek retribution

Their hands are constrained, in destitution

Until its end. When he finished reciting, al-Rida (peace be upon him) stood up and entered his chamber. He presented him with a purse containing a hundred dinars and apologized to him. Di'bil returned it to him and said, "By Allah, I did not come for this. I came only to greet you, seek blessings by looking at your blessed face, and I am content. If you see fit to give me something from your clothing for blessings, it would be dearer to me." So al-Rida gave him a robe from Khaz fabric, and in return, Di'bil returned the purse to him.¹³⁷

His Death

The Imam in Marw was sought after by people from different social classes, both near and far, and his fame spread throughout the land. Muslims held a strong attachment to him, which raised the fears and concerns of Al-Ma'mun. He was worried that the reins of power might slip from his hands, contrary to his desires and the succession he had in mind. Al-Ma'mun's suspicions were further reinforced when he sent for the Imam on the day of the Eid to lead the prayers and deliver a sermon to the people. Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) responded, saying, "You know the conditions I had set for accepting the authority. Therefore, exempt me

¹³⁷ Al-Fusul al-Muhimah 246, Al-Irshad 316, Al-Aghani 18/58, Zahr al-Adab 1/86, Ma'ahid al-Tansee' 1/205, Al-Ittihaaf 165, Tarikh Dimashq 5/234. For further reference, one can consult the mentioned sources.

from leading the prayers among the people." Al-Ma'mun replied, "I only intended to put people's hearts at ease and let them recognize your virtues."

The messengers continued to shuttle between them regarding this matter. When Al-Ma'mun persisted, Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) sent a message to him, stating, "If you exempt me, it would be more beloved to me. But if you do not exempt me, then I will go out [to the prayer] just as the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) and the Commander of the Faithful (peace be upon him) did." Al-Ma'mun replied, "You may go out as you wish." He then ordered his guards and officials, as well as the people, to gather at the door of Imam al-Rida (peace be upon him).

It is mentioned that people sat for Abu al-Hasan (peace be upon him) in the streets and rooftops, while women and children gathered, waiting for his emergence. Abu al-Hasan performed ablution, put on his garments, and covered his head with a turban. He let one end hang over his chest and the other between his shoulders. He applied some fragrance and took a staff in his hand. He told his followers, "Do as I did," and they came out before him. He walked with a slight limp, with his trousers rolled up to his calves, and he wore loose clothes. He walked a little, raised his head to the sky, and began to say the Takbir (Allahu Akbar). His followers joined him in saying the Takbir. When the soldiers and guards saw him, they all fell off their mounts to the ground. Then he continued to say the Takbir, and the people thought that the heavens and walls were echoing his voice. Marw trembled with weeping and commotion when they saw Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) and heard his Takbir.

Al-Ma'mun was informed about this, so Al-Fadl ibn Sahl said to him, "If Al-Rida reaches the prayer area on this path, the people will revolt with him, and we will all be in danger. So, order him to return." Al-Ma'mun sent someone to request his return. Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) complied, and the matter caused a division among the people on that day.¹³⁸

The poet al-Buhtari alluded to this story in some of his verses:

They mentioned your resemblance to the Prophet, and they rejoiced

When you emerged from the ranks, and they proclaimed 'Allahu Akbar'

¹³⁸ Mufid: al-Irshad 312.

Until you reached the prayer area, dressed in the light of guidance,

It shines upon you, and you walked humbly,

By Allah, he does not boast nor show arrogance.

This and similar incidents, particularly the rebellion of al-Ma'mun's brother, Zaid bin Musa in Basra against al-Ma'mun, because he had delegated the succession to Ali bin Musa al-Rida, whom he believed would lead to the removal of power from the Abbasid household. All of this, among other things, compelled al-Ma'mun to protect himself and his people from this danger, so he resorted to the mentioned method of poisoning as documented in historical books.

It is narrated from Abu Nuwas that he used to compose poetry praising every distinguished person except the Imam. When one of his companions criticized him for that, saying, "I have never seen anyone more audacious than you. You have not left any wine, intoxication, or subject without saying something about it. However, about Ali bin Musa al-Rida in your time, you have not said anything." Abu Nuwas replied, "By Allah, I refrained from praising him out of respect for him. I do not possess the same worth to speak about someone like him." Then, after a while, he recited the following verses:

I was told that you are the best of people in character,

In the arts of eloquent speech, you excel,

A praise that springs forth from the virtuous and noble,

A pearl of wisdom that I hold in my hands.

Why did you abandon praising Ibn Musa,

And the virtues that are gathered in him?

I said, "I cannot praise an Imam,

For Gabriel himself was a servant to his father."

And he also said about him (peace be upon him):

*Purified ones, pure in their inner selves,
 Prayers flow upon them wherever they are mentioned.
 Those who are not from the Alawites when attributed to them,
 Have no glory in the ancient past.
 Allah has made you excel in creation,
 He perfected your character and chose you, O humans.
 You are the highest assembly, and with you,
 Is the knowledge of the Book and the revealed chapters.¹³⁹*

When the Imam (peace be upon him) was martyred, he was buried in the city of Tus, in a grave adjacent to Harun al-Rashid's grave. The tomb of Imam al-Rida is now a revered shrine where Muslims flock to visit and seek blessings.

May the peace of Allah be upon him, the day he was born, the day he was martyred, and the day he will be resurrected.

¹³⁹ Ibn Khallikan: Wafayat al-A'yan 3/270.

THE NINTH IMAM

Muhammad Ibn Ali Ibn Musa al-Jawad

(peace be upon them)

The Generous

He is the ninth Imam from the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them). He was born in the city of Al-Madina Al-Munawara in the month of Ramadan in the year 195 after the Hijra. He inherited honor from his fathers and ancestors, and his veins were nourished from the source of Prophethood, and his tree was watered from the fountain of Revelation.

He assumed the position of imamate after the martyrdom of his father Al-Rida (peace be upon him) in the year 203 AH. He was martyred in Baghdad in the year 220 AH. He witnessed the caliphate of Al-Ma'mun and the early days of the caliphate of Al-Mu'tasim.

As for his imamate and guardianship, numerous narrations have mentioned them.¹⁴⁰

He is nicknamed Al-Jawad, Al-Qani, Al-Murtadha, Al-Najib, Al-Taqi, Al-Zaki, and other titles indicating his high status and elevated position.

I say: When Al-Rida (peace be upon him) passed away, Al-Jawad assumed the Imamate in Medina, by the will of his father, even though he was only nine or ten years old. Al-Ma'mun pursued the same policy with him as he did with his father (peace be upon him), contrary to his Abbasid predecessors, who used to deal with the Imams from the Ahl al-Bayt with killing and imprisonment. This increased people's love for the Ahl al-Bayt and their dislike for the caliphs. When Al-Ma'mun realized this, he changed his approach and adopted another method, which involved bringing the people of the Ahl al-Bayt from their place of residence to the seat of the caliphate, so that he could oversee their movements and residences. This policy continued towards them until the eleventh Imam, as you will come to know.

Historical Context

When Al-Ma'mun brought the Imam to the center of the caliphate, he was deeply impressed by him, due to what he saw of his excellence at such a young age, his knowledge, wisdom, literature, and the perfection of his mind, which no one among the scholars of that time could match. He married his daughter Umm al-Fadl to him and took her with him to Medina. He

¹⁴⁰ Refer to Al-Kafi 1/320-323, Athbat Al-Huda 3/321-328.

was eager to honor, respect, and elevate his status. We will limit ourselves here to mentioning two matters:

1. When Imam Al-Rida (peace be upon him) passed away and Al-Ma'mun arrived in Baghdad, he once went hunting and passed by a group of children playing. Muhammad al-Jawad stood among them, although he was only nine years old at that time. When Al-Ma'mun approached, the other children ran away, but Muhammad al-Jawad remained standing. Al-Ma'mun asked him, "Why didn't you run away like the others?" Muhammad al-Jawad quickly replied, "O Commander of the Faithful, my companions ran away out of fear, but I assume you have good intentions, so there is no reason for me to flee from someone who has no malice towards me." The words of Muhammad al-Jawad and his good appearance impressed Al-Ma'mun, who asked him, "What is your name, young boy?" He replied, "Muhammad ibn Ali al-Rida (peace be upon him)." So he supplicated for mercy to his father.¹⁴¹

2. When Al-Ma'mun wanted to marry his daughter, Umm al-Fadl, to Imam al-Jawad, it weighed heavily on the Abbasids, and they said to him: "We bear witness to Allah that you should reconsider this decision you have resolved to marry the son of Al-Rida. We fear that he may take away from us a matter that Allah has entrusted to us, and he may strip us of the honor that Allah has bestowed upon us. We have known the difference between us and these people, both in the past and present. We have seen what the previous caliphs did in terms of distancing themselves from them and belittling them. We were in a moment of hesitation with your actions with Al-Rida until Allah relieved us of that burden." They continued, "Indeed, this young man, even if you are pleased with him, is a child without knowledge. Give him some time until he matures and gains understanding of the religion, and then do as you see fit."

Al-Ma'mun said, "Woe to you! I know this young man from among you. The people of this household have knowledge from Allah, and divine inspiration has guided them. Their forefathers have always been rich in knowledge of religion and literature, unlike the deficient commoners. If you wish, test Abu Ja'far until his condition becomes clear to you." They agreed,

¹⁴¹ Al-Fusul al-Muhimma 266.

and then they went out, and their consensus was that Yahya ibn Aktham would ask Abu Ja'far a question since he was the judge of the time. Al-Ma'mun granted permission for this.

The people gathered on the agreed-upon day, and Al-Ma'mun ordered a rug to be spread for Abu Ja'far, and it was done. Yahya ibn Aktham sat before him, while the people arranged themselves in their ranks. Al-Ma'mun was sitting in a place connected to Abu Ja'far - peace be upon him.

Yahya ibn Aktham said to Al-Ma'mun, "May I have your permission, O Commander of the Faithful, to ask Abu Ja'far?"

He said, "Seek his permission for that."

So Yahya approached him and said, "May I have your permission, may I be your ransom, to ask you a question?"

He said, "Ask if you wish."

Yahya said, "What do you say - may I be your ransom - about a person, in a state of ihram, who has hunted?"

Abu Ja'far - peace be upon him - replied, "Did he hunt inside the haram (Masjid Al-Haram) or outside it? Was he aware or ignorant? Did he hunt on purpose or unintentionally? Was he a slave or a free man? Was he a youngster or an adult? Did he hunt once or more than once? Did he hunt a bird or other animals? Was it small or large? Was the hunter relented or not? Did he hunt at night or day? Was he in a state of ihram in the Hajj or in the 'Umrah?"

Yahya became confused, and his helplessness and confusion were evident on his face, causing the people in the gathering to know his state.

Al-Ma'mun said, "Praise be to Allah for this blessing and for guiding me in my decision." Then he said to Abu Ja'far - peace be upon him -, "Propose for yourself, for I have accepted you for myself, and I am marrying you to Umm al-Fadl, my daughter."¹⁴²

¹⁴² Al-Irshad, pages 319-321, and I'lam al-Wara, page 352 for the relevant story.

When the marriage took place, al-Ma'mun said to Abu Ja'far, "If you please, may you mention the answer to what you have explained about the various aspects of the punishment for hunting during ihram, so that we may learn from it and benefit."

Abu Ja'far (peace be upon him) replied, "If a muhrim kills the prey, which is a large bird, outside the haram, he should pay a sheep as compensation. If he kills the prey inside the haram, he should pay two sheep. If the prey is a small bird outside the haram, the compensation is a lamb that is just weaned. If the same bird is killed inside the haram, the compensation is a lamb and the price of the small bird. If he has hunted a wild donkey, the compensation is a cow. If an ostrich is hunted, the compensation is zibh (Islamic slaughtering) of a camel. If the prey is a deer, the compensation is a sheep. If one of these animals is hunted inside the haram, the compensation is twofold and should be slaughtered beside the ka'bah. If the muhrim is in Hajj, he should bring the animal to Mina and slaughter it there. The compensation of hunting is the same for an ignorant and an aware muhrim. However, intentional hunting in this state is a sin, while unintentional hunting is not a sin. The compensation of a free hunter should be paid by him, but the compensation of a slave hunter should be paid by his master. If the hunter is an adolescent, the compensation is not obligatory for him. If the muhrim person who has hunted repents, he will have no punishment in the Hereafter. But if he does not repent and resists on his deed, he will bear Allah's punishment."

Al-Ma'mun said to him, "Well done, Abu Ja'far..."¹⁴³

Return of al-Jawad to Medina

Then Abu Ja'far, after staying for a while in Baghdad, migrated to Medina and resided there until al-Ma'mun passed away and al-Mu'tasim was pledged allegiance to. Al-Mu'tasim continued to be concerned about Abu Ja'far, fearing the gathering of people around him and his claim to the caliphate. For this reason, he followed the same policy as his brother al-Ma'mun before him, and he summoned Imam al-Jawad (peace be upon him) to Baghdad in the year 220 AH¹⁴⁴. He remained there until the end of Dhu al-Qi'dah of that year when he passed away. He

¹⁴³ Al-Irshad, p. 322.

¹⁴⁴ Al-Irshad, p. 326, and in I'lam al-Wara, p. 304: The reason for the Imam's arrival in Baghdad was the request of al-Mu'tasim, who had supporters in Medina. He arrived in Baghdad for two nights in the sacred month of Muharram in the year 225 AH... Then it is mentioned, "He lived for 25 years until his demise."

was 25 years old and a few months. He was buried beside his grandfather Musa ibn Ja'far in the Quraish graveyards.

It is no secret that if the date of his arrival in Baghdad was in the year 225 AH, then he would have been 30 years old at the time of his death because he was born in the year 195 AH.

Ibn Shahrashoub said: He died from poisoning.¹⁴⁵

May Allah's peace be upon our Imam al-Jawad on the day of his birth, the day he died or was martyred by poison, and the day he will be resurrected alive.

¹⁴⁵ Ibn Shahrashoub: Al-Manaqib 4/379.

THE TENTH IMAM

Abul Hasan Ali Ibn Muhammad Ibn Ali
Al-Hadi

(peace be upon them)

The Guide

Imam Ali ibn Muhammad al-Hadi is the tenth Imam, and the shining light. He was born in the year 212 AH and passed away in Samarra in the year 254 AH. He belongs to the House of Prophethood and Imamate, the center of authority and caliphate, and is a fruit from the tree of Prophethood.

He assumed the position of Imamate after his father, Imam al-Jawad (peace be upon him). He witnessed the caliphates of al-Mu'tasim, al-Wathiq, al-Mutawakkil, al-Muntasir, al-Musta'in, and al-Mu'tazz. He had various encounters and issues with them that cannot be fully mentioned here.

Ibn Shahrashub said: "He was the kindest of people in appearance, the most truthful in speech, the sweetest in temperament from near and the most perfect from afar. When he was silent, his dignity soared, and when he spoke, his brilliance manifested."¹⁴⁶

And 'Imad al-Din al-Hanbali said: "He was a knowledgeable Imam, devoted in worship."¹⁴⁷

Al-Mufid stated: "After his father, Imam Abu Ja'far, his son Abu al-Hasan Ali ibn Muhammad assumed the Imamate. He possessed the qualities of Imamate, and his Imamate was established through textual evidence, with the indication of caliphate from his father."¹⁴⁸

Multiple sources confirm his Imamate through our sources. For further information, one can refer to Al-Kafi, Ithbat al-Hudat, and other related books.¹⁴⁹

Al-Mutawakkil practiced the same malicious approach that Al-Ma'mun had adopted, followed by his brother Al-Mu'tasim, towards the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, forcing them to reside in the caliphate's headquarters and keeping guards and surveillance on them, monitoring every aspect of their lives.

Al-Mutawakkil was one of the most wicked Abbasid caliphs, and he harbored intense animosity towards Ali. He heard about the esteemed position of Ali al-Hadi in Medina and his

¹⁴⁶ Ibn Shahrashub: *Manaqib Al Abi Talib*, Vol. 4, p. 401, Qom edition.

¹⁴⁷ *Shatharat al-Dhahab*, Vol. 2, p. 128, in the events of the year 254.

¹⁴⁸ *Al-Irshad*, p. 327.

¹⁴⁹ *Al-Kulayni*, *Al-Kafi*, Vol. 1, pp. 323-325; *Al-Sheikh al-Hurr al-Amili*, *Ithbat al-Hudat*, Vol. 30, pp. 355-358.

influence there, as people gravitated towards him. This made Al-Mutawakkil fearful.¹⁵⁰ So, he summoned Yahya ibn Harthama and said to him, 'Go to Medina and observe his condition and report back to us.'

Yahya said, 'So I went to Medina, and upon my arrival, there was a tremendous commotion among its inhabitants, unlike anything people had ever heard. They were afraid for the safety of Ali al-Hadi, as he was kind to them and had no attachment to worldly possessions. He constantly attended the mosque and had no inclination towards worldly matters.'

Yahya continued, 'I assured them and swore to them that I had not been ordered to harm him and that no harm would come to him. Then, I searched his house but found nothing except Qur'ans, manuscripts of supplications, and books of knowledge. This greatly impressed me, and I took it upon myself to serve him and treated him with utmost kindness. When I brought him to Baghdad, I first presented him to Ishaq ibn Ibrahim al-Tahir, who was the governor of Baghdad at the time. He said to me, 'O Yahya, this man is the son of the Messenger of Allah, and you know what kind of man Al-Mutawakkil is. If you incite him against him, he will kill him, and the Messenger of Allah will be your opponent on the Day of Judgment.' I replied, 'By Allah, I have not encountered anything from him except goodness in every matter.'

Then, I brought him to the palace to meet the Turkish chamberlain, and I informed him of his arrival. The chamberlain said, 'By Allah, if a single hair falls from his head, only you will be held accountable for it.' When I entered upon Al-Mutawakkil, he asked me about him, so I told him about his excellent character, his safe journey, his righteousness, and his asceticism. I informed him that I had searched his house and found nothing but Qur'ans and books of knowledge. I also mentioned that the people of Medina feared for his safety. Al-Mutawakkil honored him, rewarded him generously, treated him with utmost respect, and brought him along to Samarra.¹⁵¹

Despite the fact that the Imam lived in the same country as Al-Mutawakkil and that the spies closely monitored him, he was secretly informed that there were books and weapons

¹⁵⁰ It is narrated that one of Al-Mutawakkil's loyalists and followers, Buriyah al-Abbasi, wrote to him, saying, 'If you have any concerns in the holy cities (Mecca and Medina), then remove Ali ibn Muhammad from them, as he has been attracting people to himself, and many have followed him.'

¹⁵¹ Sibṭ ibn al-Jawzī, *Tadhkirat al-Khawass* 322.

belonging to his Shia supporters from the people of Qom in his house. He was also mentioned of his determination to overthrow the state. Al-Mutawakkil then sent a group of Turks to attack the Imam's house at night but they found nothing there. They found him, however, in a locked house covered with a woolen cloak, sitting on sand and gravel, facing towards Allah, reciting verses from the Quran. They carried him in that state to Al-Mutawakkil and said to him, "We found nothing in his house, instead we found him facing Allah and reciting verses of the Quran, facing the qibla." Al-Mutawakkil was sitting in his drinking assembly when they brought the Imam to him, still holding the cup in his hand. When Al-Mutawakkil saw him, he was in awe of him, respected him, and made him sit beside him, handing him the cup he was holding. The Imam (peace be upon him) said, "By Allah, my flesh and blood have never touched wine, so excuse me." And he excused him, but he told him, "Recite some poetry to me." Ali said, "I am not very good at reciting poetry," but Al-Mutawakkil insisted. So the Imam recited the following verses while sitting beside him:

They camp on the peaks of mountains surveilled

By hardened men, yet their guards won't avail

Debased after pomp from their lofty stations

And into their pits, what pitied destinations!

A shouter does call them while they lie in graves

Where are beds, crowns, and lavish displays?

Where are the faces well-caked in their glamor

That once took curtains and garlands as armor?

The answer emerges from deep in their caskets:

Now those dear faces are grub for the maggots!

How long it had been that they ate and drank endlessly

Having eaten so long, now they are the specialty!

So Al-Mutawakkil wept until his beard was soaked with tears flowing from his eyes, and those present wept as well. He presented four thousand dinars to Ali and then sent him back to his home, honoring him.¹⁵²

His Scholarly Works

The preservationists and narrators have narrated numerous traditions from the Imam (peace be upon him) in various fields of creed and Shariah. The scholars have compiled them in their books, and Al-Hurr Al-Amili transmitted them in his book titled "Wasa'il al-Shi'a" under different chapters. It is worth noting that the Imam (peace be upon him) has some epistles, including:

1. His epistle in response to compulsion and free will, proving justice and equality between the two positions. Al-Hasan ibn Ali ibn Shu'ba Al-Harrani mentioned it in his book titled "Tuhaf al-'Uqul".¹⁵³
2. His responses to Yahya ibn Aktham regarding his issues, which Al-Harrani also mentioned in "Tuhaf al-'Uqul."
3. A section of religious rulings mentioned by Ibn Shahrashoub in "Manaqib."

To illustrate a specific style of the Imam's interpretation and captivate the reader's attention, we present an example from this interpretation:

Some Christian man, who committed adultery with a Muslim woman, was brought to al-Mutawakkil, the Abbasid caliph, in order to be punished. However, the man embraced Islam. Yahya ibn Aktham said, "Faith erases what came before." Some said, "He should be punished with three penalties." Al-Mutawakkil wrote a letter to Imam Al-Hadi asking him about it. When the Imam read the letter, he wrote back, "He is to be hit until he dies." The jurists disagreed with this. So, they wrote to him to inquire about the rationale behind it. He replied, "In the name of Allah, the Most Gracious, the Most Merciful: *'And when they saw Our punishment, they said,*

¹⁵² Al-Mas'udi: "Murooj adh-Dhahab" 4/11.

¹⁵³ Tuhaf al-'Uqul, pp. 238-352.

"We believe in Allāh alone and disbelieve in that which we used to associate with Him." But never did their faith benefit them once they saw Our punishment. [It is] the established way of Allāh which has preceded among His servants. And the disbelievers thereupon lost [all].' [40:84-85] Al-Mutawakkil ordered to execute the punishment until he died.¹⁵⁴

His Death

Abu al-Hasan (peace be upon him) passed away in the month of Rajab, in the year 252 AH, and he was buried in his house secretly from those who saw him. He left behind his son Abu Muhammad al-Hasan, who became the Imam after him, as well as al-Husayn, Muhammad, Ja'far, and his daughter Aisha. His location remained secret until he passed away ten years and some months later. At that time, he was forty-one years old, as mentioned earlier.¹⁵⁵

Al-Mas'udi detailed the circumstances of his death, funeral, and the appointment of Imamate to his son Abu Muhammad al-'Askari. For further information, one can refer to his account.¹⁵⁶

¹⁵⁴ Ibn Shahrashoub: Manaqib Ale Abi Talib, Vol. 4, pp. 403-405.

¹⁵⁵ Al-Irshad, p. 327.

¹⁵⁶ Athbat al-Wasiyah.

THE ELEVENTH IMAM

**Al-Hasan Ibn Ali Ibn Muhammad Abu
Muhammad Al-'Askari**

(peace be upon them)

The Resident of garrison town

Abu Muhammad, Al-Hasan ibn Ali Al-Hadi ibn Muhammad Al-Jawad, one of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, and the eleventh Imam, known as Al-Askari, was born in the year 232 AH.¹⁵⁷ Al-Khatib mentioned in his history,¹⁵⁸ and Ibn al-Jawzi in his biography,¹⁵⁹ that he was born in the year 231 AH, and he accompanied his father to Iraq in the year 236 AH when he was four years old and several months old. After his father's martyrdom, he assumed the role of Imamate and spiritual leadership. He possessed virtues and excelled over his contemporaries, and was known for his excellence in action, knowledge, asceticism, and bravery.¹⁶⁰ Many jurists and scholars have narrated from him, with their number exceeding 150 individuals.¹⁶¹ He passed away in the year 260 AH and was buried in his residence in Samarra, where his father was also buried.

And after him was his son, the Awaited one for The State of Truth. He had hidden his birth and concealed his affair due to the difficult times, the intensity of the power struggle, and the relentless pursuit of his matter. However, God, may He be glorified, protected him from the evil of his enemies, just as He protected all His chosen ones like Ibrahim al-Khalil and Musa al-Kalim. Indeed, the authority failed in their pursuit of them and their attacks upon them.

The Imam became famous as "al-'Askari" because he is attributed to 'Askar, which refers to the secret of the city built by al-Mu'tasim and to which he transferred his military forces. Al-Mutawakkil personally chose his [Imam al-'Askari's] father, Ali, to reside in that city, where they lived for twenty years and nine months. He and his son were traced back to it.¹⁶²

And Sibt Ibn al-Jawzi said: He was a knowledgeable and trustworthy scholar who narrated hadiths from his father, from his grandfather, and among his transmitted narrations is a great hadith about the prohibition of wine.

Then he mentioned the hadith from his grandfather, Abi al-Faraj al-Jawzi, in his book entitled "Tahrim al-Khamr" [The Prohibition of wine]. Then he traced the chain of narration to al-Hasan al-'Askari, who attributed the hadith to his forefathers, to Ali ibn Abi Talib, saying, "I

¹⁵⁷ Al-Kulayni: Al-Kafi 1/503.

¹⁵⁸ Al-Khatib: Tarikh Baghdad 7/366.

¹⁵⁹ Ibn al-Jawzi: Tadhkirat al-Khawass 322.

¹⁶⁰ Al-Mufid: Al-Irshad 335.

¹⁶¹ Al-Atardi: Musnad al-Imam Al-Askari, who compiled everything narrated from him and attributed to him.

¹⁶² Ibn Khalikan: "Wafayat al-A'yan" 2/94.

bear witness by Allah, I have heard Muhammad, the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his progeny, saying: "I bear witness by Allah, I have heard Gabriel saying: I bear witness by Allah, I have heard Michael saying: I bear witness by Allah, I have heard Israfil saying: I bear witness by Allah, upon the Preserved Tablet, that He said: I have heard Allah saying: The drinker of wine is like the worshiper of idols."¹⁶³

And indeed, Sibt ibn al-Jawzi fell into confusion when he presumed that the chain of narrators for this hadith from the Imam - peace be upon him - attributed it to the Messenger of Allah - peace be upon him and his family - exclusively. However, the reality is different. All the narrations of the Imams from the Ahl al-Bayt are traced back to the noble Prophet - peace be upon him and his family. They only narrate in the fields of jurisprudence, interpretation, ethics, and supplication what reached them from the noble Prophet - peace be upon him and his family - through their fathers and ancestors. Their narrations do not reflect their personal opinions. So whoever claims otherwise and assumes that they are independent jurists has wrongly judged them, comparing them to others who rely on their personal opinions, and he is mistaken in his judgment. Since their early childhood, they have never deviated from responding to the call of their Lord, nor have they attended the gatherings of scholars, nor have they learned anything from other than their fathers. Therefore, what they mention of knowledge is inherited from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) through an unseen inheritance whose true nature is known only to Allah, the Exalted, and those firmly grounded in knowledge.

Imam Jafar as-Sadiq (peace be upon him) clearly explains this matter, without any ambiguity, as he says: "My narrations are narrations of my father, and the narrations of my father are narrations of my grandfather Ali ibn Abi Talib, the Commander of the Faithful, and the narrations of Ali, the Commander of the Faithful, are narrations of the Messenger of Allah, may Allah bless him and his family, and the narrations of the Messenger of Allah are the words of Allah, the Almighty".¹⁶⁴

Hafs ibn al-Bukhtari narrated, saying: I said to Abu Abdullah Al-Sadiq (peace be upon him), "I hear the narration from you, but I don't know if I heard it directly from you or from your

¹⁶³ Tadhkirat al-Khawass 324.

¹⁶⁴ Al-Irshad, 274.

father." He replied, "Whatever you heard from me, attribute it to my father, and whatever you heard from me, attribute it to the Messenger of Allah, peace be upon him and his family."¹⁶⁵

The Imams of the Muslims are, as the saying goes:

And people convey their speech,

Our grandfather narrated from Gabriel from the Creator,

Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) admonished Salama ibn Kahil and Al-Hakam ibn 'Utaybah for taking narrations from people and not paying attention to the narrations of the Ahl al-Bayt (the family of the Prophet). He said to them, 'Go to the East and the West, you will not find authentic knowledge except that which has come from us, the Ahl al-Bayt.'

Despite the fact that the Abbasid caliphs put the Imam under strict surveillance and appointed spies, the scholars and narrators still reported numerous narrations from him in various fields. It is even narrated that the Imam (peace be upon him), despite all that, maintained continuous contact with the Shia, whose number was estimated to be in the tens of millions, and they had no one to refer to other than the Imam (peace be upon him).

Discussions about his morals, conduct, virtues, generosity, dignity, and his fearless confrontation of the Abbasid caliphs, as well as the wisdom, advice, and etiquette attributed to him, require extensive volumes, and our virtuous scholars have already addressed these matters. However, here we will provide a glimpse of his knowledge:

1. The disconnected letters have puzzled the interpreters, leading them to different conclusions right and left. Al-Razi has gathered their conclusions in the beginning of his Tafsir Al-Kabir, with nearly twenty different opinions. However, the Imam (peace be upon him) resolved this dilemma in the best and most natural way by saying, "The Quraysh and the Jews have denied the Qur'an, and they claim it is clear magic that you are reciting.

So Allah said, "***Alif, Lam, Meem. This is the Book...***" [2:1-2] meaning, "O Muhammad, this Book that We have revealed to you consists of the disconnected letters such as Alif, Lam, Meem, which are in your language and follow your alphabet. So produce something similar to it

¹⁶⁵ Wasa'il al-Shi'a, Vol. 18, Chapter 8 of the Qualities of a Judge, Hadith 86.

if you are truthful. Seek the help of all your witnesses in this matter." Then Allah showed that they are incapable of doing so by saying, Say, ***"If mankind and the jinn gathered in order to produce the like of this Qur'ān, they could not produce the like of it, even if they were to each other assistants."*** [17:88]¹⁶⁶

And this meaning was narrated from his father, Imam Al-Hadi - peace be upon him -.¹⁶⁷

2. The people of chaos and controversy would cast doubts on the path of the Muslims and say, "You say in your prayers: ***'Guide us to the straight path' [1:6]***. Are you not on it? So what does this invocation mean? Or are you ignorant of it, so you invoke for Him to guide you to it?" The Imam decisively interpreted their tumult by saying:

"Grant us your guidance, through which we obeyed you in the past days, so that we may obey you likewise in our future actions."

Then he explained the meaning of the straight path by saying: "It is two paths: a path in this world and a path in the Hereafter. The first path is the one that refrains from extremism, rises above shortcomings, remains upright without deviating towards falsehood. The other path is the path of the believers leading to Paradise, which is straight. They do not deviate from Paradise to the Hellfire, nor to anything other than Paradise."¹⁶⁸

During the time of Imam al-Askari, the matter of extremists [ghulāt] had become widespread, and they attributed things to the rightly guided Imams of which they were innocent. For this reason, the Imam emphasized that the straight path for every Muslim is to avoid extremism [ghuluw] and deficiency [taqsir].

3. Perhaps the heedless person may be deceived by the apparent meaning of His saying, ***"The path of those upon whom You have bestowed favor," [1:7]*** and imagine that the blessings referred to here are wealth, children, and physical health. While all of these are indeed blessings from Allah, the intended meaning of the verse, as indicated by His saying, ***"Not [the path] of***

¹⁶⁶ Al-Saduq: Ma'ani al-Akhbar 24, and there is a footnote to the hadith, so whoever wishes can refer back to the book.

¹⁶⁷ Al-Kulayni: Al-Kafi, Vol. 1, Book of Reason and Ignorance, Hadith 20/24-25.

¹⁶⁸ Al-Saduq: Ma'ani al-Akhbar 33.

those who have evoked [Your] anger or of those who are astray," [1:7] is the blessing of success and guidance.

For this reason, we see that the Imam interprets this favor by saying: "Say: Guide us to the path of those whom You have blessed with success in Your religion and obedience, and they are the ones whom Allah, the Almighty, has mentioned: *'And whoever obeys Allāh and the Messenger - those will be with the ones upon whom Allāh has bestowed favor of the prophets, the steadfast affirmers of truth, the martyrs and the righteous. And excellent are those as companions.'*" [4:69] Then he said:

"These are not the ones who are blessed with wealth and physical health, although all of this is a visible blessing from Allah"¹⁶⁹

4. At that time, the idea of God's lack of knowledge about things before their creation had spread, influenced by the concepts inherited from Greek philosophical schools. Muhammad ibn Salih asked him about the saying of God: *"Allāh eliminates what He wills or confirms, and with Him is the Mother of the Book."* [13:39] So he asked, "Does He erase only what existed and confirm only what did not exist?" I said to myself, "This is contrary to what Hasham Al-Fawati says: He does not know a thing until it exists." Then he looked at me with surprise and said: Exalted is Allah, the Almighty, the Knower of things before their existence, the Creator when there is no creation, the Lord when there is no lordship, the Omnipotent before what is possible.¹⁷⁰

The outcome of the research

These are the Imams of the Shia and their leaders, rather the Imams of all Muslims. How could they not be? After his departure, the Messenger of Allah left behind the two weighty things and urged the Ummah to hold fast to them. He said, "Indeed, I am leaving among you two weighty things: the Book of Allah and my progeny, the people of my household. As long as you hold fast to them, you will never go astray after me".¹⁷¹

¹⁶⁹ Same source: 36.

¹⁷⁰ Al-Mas'udi: "Ithbat Al-Wasiyah" 241.

¹⁷¹ This hadith is narrated by multiple companions of the authentic collections and is considered Mutawatir [mass-transmitted]. (Notice the close similitude between the Islamic sects regarding this hadith, where its chain of narrators is connected to the Noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family).

But it is unfortunate that Ahlul Sunnah wal Jama'ah did not rely on the exegesis of the Book of Allah according to the sayings of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt, who are the companions of the Quran, its interpreters, and the second weight of the two weights. Instead, they sought the interpretation from individuals who do not reach their level or attain their status. Such individuals include Mujahid ibn Jabr (died in 104 AH), Ikrimah al-Barbari (died in 104 AH), Tawus ibn Kaysan al-Yamani (died in 106 AH), Ata' ibn Abi Rabah (died in 114 AH), and Muhammad ibn Ka'b al-Quradhi (died in 118 AH), among others. These individuals do not possess even a fraction of the reliability and scholarly status possessed by the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt - may Allah's blessings be upon them.

Islam is a creed and a code of law, and salvation from misguidance, according to the narration of the two weighty things, lies in referring to them both. As for anyone other than them, if they refer to these two, it is commendable; otherwise, it holds no value. As for the companions and the Tabi'un, their opinions are not considered unless they are derived from the Book of Allah or the Sunnah of His Prophet. The narrations of the Imams of the Ahl al-Bayt are nothing but an eternal radiance of the words of their noble grandfather and his tradition.

THE TWELFTH IMAM

Al-Mahdi Ibn Al-Hasan Ibn Ali Al-Muntadhar

(peace be upon them)

The Awaited one

He is Abu al-Qasim Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari al-Hujjah, the righteous successor. He was born in secret on the night of the fifteenth of Sha'ban, in the year two hundred and fifty-five. He was only five years old when his father passed away. Allah granted him wisdom as a child, just as He did with Yahya, as mentioned by Allah Almighty: ***"O Yahya, take the Scripture with determination." [19:12]*** And He made him an Imam while he was still a child, just as He made Jesus a prophet while he was an infant. Allah Almighty says, speaking about Himself addressing His people: ***"Indeed, I am the servant of Allah. He has given me the Scripture and made me a prophet." [19:30]***

The Muslims have agreed upon the appearance of the Mahdi in the end times to eradicate ignorance, injustice, oppression, and to spread the banners of justice and uphold the word of truth. He will manifest the entire religion even if the disbelievers detest it. By the permission of Allah, he will save the world from the abomination of worshiping other than Allah, abolish immoralities and corrupt customs, nullify the infidel laws that were enacted by whims, sever the ties of nationalist and racist biases, erase the causes of animosity and hatred that have become the reason for the division and disunity of the Ummah. By his appearance, he will fulfill the promise of Allah, which He had made to the believers, saying:

1. ***"Allāh has promised those who have believed among you and done righteous deeds that He will surely grant them succession [to authority] upon the earth just as He granted it to those before them and that He will surely establish for them [therein] their religion which He has preferred for them and that He will surely substitute for them, after their fear, security, [for] they worship Me, not associating anything with Me. But whoever disbelieves after that - then those are the defiantly disobedient." [24:55]***

2 - ***"And We wanted to confer favor upon those who were oppressed in the land and make them leaders and make them inheritors" [28:5]***

3 - ***"And We have already written in the book [of Psalms] after the [previous] mention that the land is inherited by My righteous servants." [21:105]***

The Ummah will witness, after his appearance (peace be upon him), a golden era in which not a single house on Earth remains without the entrance of the word of Islam, nor a village remains where the call of "There is no god but Allah" is not proclaimed morning and evening.

I say: The authentic texts and narrations transmitted by the Sunnis and Shi'ites, both confirming the leadership of the Ahl al-Bayt (peace be upon them), have been widely reported. These texts explicitly indicate that their number is like the number of the chiefs of the Children of Israel. The last of these Imams is the one who will fill the Earth - in his time - with justice and fairness, just as it was filled with injustice and oppression. The narrations of the twelfth Imam, known as the awaited Mahdi, have been narrated by many of the Sunni scholars in their various authentic collections. For example, Tirmidhi (died in 297 AH), Abu Dawood (died in 275 AH), Ibn Majah (died in 275 AH), and others. They attributed these narrations to a group of the Ahl al-Bayt of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family) and his companions, such as Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him), Abdullah ibn Abbas, Abdullah ibn Umar, Umm Salamah (the wife of the noble Prophet, peace be upon him and his family), Abu Sa'id al-Khudri, Abu Huraira, and others.

1. Imam Ahmad narrated in his Musnad from the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family): "If only one day of this world remains, Allah will prolong that day until He sends a man from my Ahl al-Bayt who will fill the Earth with justice, just as it was filled with oppression."¹⁷²

2. Abu Dawood reported from Abdullah ibn Mas'ud: The Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: "The world will not come to an end until a man from my family, whose name matches my name, assumes leadership over the Arabs."¹⁷³

3. Abu Dawood reported from Umm Salamah (may Allah be pleased with her) that she said: I heard the Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings be upon him and his family, say: "The Mahdi is from my family, from the offspring of Fatimah."¹⁷⁴

¹⁷² Musnad Ahmad 1/99, 3/17-70.

¹⁷³ Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Volume 11, page 48, Hadith number 7810.

¹⁷⁴ Jami' at-Tirmidhi, Volume 11, page 48, Hadith number 7812.

4. At-Tirmidhi reported from Ibn Mas'ud: The Messenger of Allah, may peace and blessings be upon him and his family, said: "After me, there will be a man from my family whose name matches my name."¹⁷⁵

And many more of these consistent narrations that have reached the highest levels of mass-transmission. Dr. Abdul Baqi says: "The problem is not just one or two hadiths or narrators; it is a collection of narrations and reports, numbering around eighty, which have been transmitted by hundreds of narrators and more than one author of an authentic book."¹⁷⁶

This is the Mahdi agreed upon by scholars and speakers. The difference between the Shia and the Sunnis lies in his birth. The Shia believe that the promised Mahdi is the twelfth Imam who was born in Samarra in the year 255 AH and disappeared after his father's death in the year 260 AH. The reports from his ancestors unanimously support this, leaving no doubt or ambiguity.¹⁷⁷ This view is also supported by a group of Sunni scholars, who believe that he was born and his name is Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari.

Yes, many of them said: that he will be born in the end of time, and since the people of the Household are more knowledgeable about what is in the household, whoever refers to the narrations of the Imams of the people of the Household in their books, the truth will become clear to him, and that the newborn for Imam Al-Askari is the promised Mahdi.

And among those who agreed from the scholars of the Sunni sect that the offspring of the house of Al-Hasan Al-Askari is the promised Mahdi:

1 - Kamal al-Din Muhammad ibn Talha ibn Muhammad al-Qurashi al-Shafi'i in his book "Matalib al-Su'ul fi Manaqib Al al-Rasul." He was praised by someone who translated for him, like Al-Yafi'i in "Miraat al-Jinan fi Hawadith Sana 650 Hijri."

He said - after mentioning his name and lineage -: "Al-Mahdi al-Hujjah, the righteous successor who is awaited. As for his birth, it is a secret for those who see it, and as for his

¹⁷⁵ Same source, Hadith number 7810.

¹⁷⁶ Dr. Abdul Baqi, Baina Yaday As-Sa'ah, p. 123.

¹⁷⁷ Read these reports in the book "Kamal Al-Deen" by Sheikh Saduq, 306-381 AH, where you will find the consistent texts stating that the promised Mahdi is the son of Imam Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Askari and that he has an occultation.

lineage, his father is al-Hasan al-Khalis.” Then he mentioned several reports about the Mahdi from the narrations of Abu Dawood, al-Tirmidhi, Muslim, al-Bukhari, and others. Then he mentioned some objections regarding his condition - peace be upon him - regarding his occultation, long life, and other matters, and he answered all of them. Then he rejected the interpretation of some of these narrations that they do not indicate that he is Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari, saying: when the Prophet described him and mentioned his name and lineage, we found those attributes and signs present in Muhammad ibn al-Hasan al-Askari, and we have learned that he is the Mahdi.

2 - Abu Abdullah Muhammad ibn Yusuf ibn Muhammad al-Kinji al-Shafi'i in his books: "Al-Bayan fi Akhbar Sahib al-Zaman" and "Kifayah al-Talib fi Manaqib Ali ibn Abi Talib."

3 - Nur al-Din Ali ibn Muhammad al-Sabbagh al-Maliki in his book "Al-Fusul al-Muhimah fi Ma'rifat al-A'imma."

4 - The jurist and preacher Shams al-Din, known as Ibn al-Jawzi, in "Tadhkirat al-Khawass."

And other scholars and preservers, mentioning their names and words, as stated by Sayyid al-Amin in "A'yan al-Shi'a wa Anhaha", go up to thirteen. Then he said: "The proponents of the existence of the Mahdi from the scholars of the Sunni sect are many, and what we have mentioned is sufficient. Whoever wishes to investigate further can refer to our book 'al-Burhan 'ala Wujud Sahib al-Zaman' and 'Risalat Kashf al-Astār' by Sheikh Husayn al-Nouri."¹⁷⁸

Belief in the appearance of the Mahdi during the era of the guided Imams was widely accepted, to the extent that Di'bil al-Khuza'i mentioned it in his poem, which he recited for Ali ibn Musa al-Ridha - peace be upon him. He said:

A leader whose advent is no doubt inevitable

By God's name and blessings, rising veritable

Between truth and falsehood, our supreme divider

¹⁷⁸ A'yan al-Shi'a 2/64-75.

Of graces and vengeance, the requiter

When Di'bil reached these verses, al-Ridha - peace be upon him - wept intensely and then raised his head. He said to him, "O Khuza'i, the Holy Spirit has spoken through your tongue in these verses. Do you know who this Imam is and when he will rise?" I said, "No, my master, but I have heard that an Imam from your lineage will emerge, purifying the earth from corruption and filling it with justice as it was filled with oppression."

He said, "O Di'bil, the Imam after me is my son Muhammad (al-Jawad), and after Muhammad, his son is Ali (al-Hadi), and after Ali, his son is Hassan (al-'Askari), and after Hassan, his son is the awaited Qa'im, who will appear during his occultation, and will be obeyed upon his emergence. If only one day remains in the world, Allah will prolong that day until he emerges and fills it with justice as it was filled with oppression. But when? As for the knowledge of the time, my father narrated to me from his father, from his ancestors, from Ali - peace be upon him - that the Prophet, peace be upon him and his family, was asked, 'O Messenger of Allah, when will the Qa'im from your progeny emerge?' He said, 'His example is like that of the Hour, which no one can unveil except at its appointed time. It will be heavy on the heavens and the earth, and it will come to you suddenly.'"¹⁷⁹

The Mahdi - may Allah hasten his reappearance - has two occultations, minor and major, as mentioned in the reports of the Imams from the Ahl al-Bayt. The minor occultation began from the beginning of his Imamate until the termination of communication between him and his Shia by the death of the ambassadors and the absence of their appointment by others. The last ambassador, Ali ibn Muhammad al-Samuri, died in the year 329 AH. During this period, the ambassadors used to see him, and perhaps others saw him too, and they would deliver his messages to his Shia in various matters.

As for the major occultation, it is from the end of the minor occultation until he rises by the permission of Allah, the Most High.

As for those who saw the Hujjah during the time of his father, both in the minor and major occultations, it is permissible to narrate from them without any objection. Many books

¹⁷⁹ Al-Saduq: Kamal al-Din wa Tamam al-Ni'mah 2/372.

have been written on this topic, the best and most beautiful of which are "Kamal al-Din" by al-Saduq and "Al-Ghaybah" by Sheikh al-Tusi.

Here, we mention some of those who saw him in his youth:

Regarding those who witnessed the Mahdi in the house of Imam al-'Askari

There is a group of companions of Imam al-'Askari who witnessed the Imam Mahdi in his early days, even after the passing of his father. We will now mention a few accounts so that the fair-minded person has no doubt about his birth:

1. Ya'qub ibn Manqush narrated, saying: "I entered upon Abu Muhammad al-Hasan ibn Ali (peace be upon them), and he was sitting on a platform in the house, and to his right was a covered room. I asked him, 'Who is the owner of this affair?' He said, 'Lift the cover.' So I lifted it, and a young boy, around ten or eight years old, came out to us. His forehead was clear, his face was white, his eyes were bright, his hands were wide, his knees were close together. He had a dimple on his right cheek, and on his head was a lock of hair. He sat on the thigh of Abu Muhammad and said to me, 'This is your master.'"¹⁸⁰

2. Ibrahim ibn Muhammad ibn Fares al-Naysaburi narrated, saying: "When the governor Umar ibn Awf intended to kill me, I was overwhelmed with great fear. I bid farewell to my family and went to the house of Abu Muhammad to bid him farewell as well. I had intended to escape. When I entered upon him, I saw a young boy sitting next to him, and his face was shining like the moon on a full moon night. I was bewildered by his light and radiance, and he almost made me forget my situation. He said, 'O Ibrahim, do not flee, for Allah will suffice you from his harm.' My confusion increased, so I said to Abu Muhammad, 'O my master, O son of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), who is this person who informed me of what was in my conscience?' He replied, 'He is my son and the successor after me.'"¹⁸¹

3. Ahmad ibn Ishaq narrated, saying: "I said to Abu Muhammad al-Hasan al-Askari, 'O son of the Messenger of Allah, who will be the Imam and successor after you?' He quickly got up and entered the house, then he came out with a young boy on his shoulder. His face was

¹⁸⁰ Al-Saduq: Kamal al-Din, Volume 2, Page 407, Chapter 38, Hadith 2.

¹⁸¹ Al-Hurr al-Amili: Ithbat al-Hudat, Volume 3, Page 700, Chapter 33, Hadith 136.

shining like the moon on a full moon night. The boy was three years old. He said, 'O Ahmad ibn Ishaq, if it were not for your honor with Allah Almighty and His proofs, I would not have shown you my son. His name and agnomen is that of the Messenger of Allah (peace be upon him and his family), and he is the one who will fill the earth with justice and equity as it was filled with injustice and oppression.'"¹⁸²

4. Abu al-Husayn al-Hasan ibn Wajnah narrated, saying: "My father told me about his grandfather that he was in the house of Hasan ibn Ali (peace be upon them). The horses were tied, and among them was Ja'far ibn Ali the liar. They were busy with looting and raiding, but my focus was on my master, al-Qa'im (peace be upon him). Suddenly, he (peace be upon him) appeared, and he came out from the door while I was looking at him. He was a six-year-old boy, and no one saw him until he disappeared."¹⁸³

5. Abdullah bin Ja'far al-Hamiri narrated: I asked Abu 'Umar Uthman bin Sa'id al-'Amri (one of the representatives of the Imam during his occultation), and I said to him, "Have you seen the successor after Abu Muhammad (peace be upon him)?" He said, "Yes, by Allah, and his neck is like this" - he gestured with his hand. So I said to him, "I have one more [question]." He said to me, "Go on." I asked: "His name?" He said, "It is forbidden for you to ask about that..."¹⁸⁴

6. Hakimah bint Imam Muhammad al-Jawad narrated: Abu Muhammad al-Hasan bin Ali (peace be upon them) sent a message to me and said, "O aunt, have your iftar with us tonight, for it is the night of the middle of Sha'ban, and surely Allah, the Blessed and Exalted, will manifest His Proof on this night, and it is His Proof on His earth." Then Hakimah, the aunt of Imam al-Askari, started speaking about the birth of Imam al-Mahdi and said, "I pulled him to myself and found him clean and purified." Then Abu Muhammad (peace be upon him) called out to me, "Come to me, O aunt of my son." So I went to him...¹⁸⁵

7. Kamil bin Ibrahim narrated: I entered upon my master Abu Muhammad (peace be upon him) and saw him wearing rich white garments. I said to myself, "The chosen one of Allah

¹⁸² Al-Saduq: Kamal al-Din, Volume 2, Page 384, Chapter 38, Hadith 1.

¹⁸³ Same source: Volume 2, Page 473, Chapter 43, Hadith 25.

¹⁸⁴ Al-Kulayni 1:329 Hadith 1.

¹⁸⁵ Al-Saduq: Kamal al-Din 2:424 Bab 42 Hadith 1.

and His Proof is wearing rich clothing, while he commands us to sympathize with our brothers and prohibits us from wearing the same." Then the Imam said, "O Kamil," I found that below the rich garment was a coarse shirt that was in contact with his body, "This [coarse garment] is for the Almighty Allah and this [the rich dress] is for you people.." Just then a gust of wind moved the curtain away, and I saw a young boy, as if he were a piece of the moon, about four years old or the like. He said to me, "O Kamil bin Ibrahim." I trembled at that, and I felt inspired to say, "Here I am, O my master." He said, "You have come to the Proof of Allah and His representative, seeking to ask: None shall enter Paradise except those who recognize your knowledge and understand your words..." until he said, "Then Abu Muhammad looked at me and smiled, and he said, 'O Kamil bin Ibrahim, why are you sitting here. Your questions were answered by the Mahdi and the Proof after me, and you have come to ask me about it?'" He said, "So I got up, having received the answer that I had concealed in myself from the Imam al-Mahdi, and I did not meet him after that."¹⁸⁶

These are examples of those who saw Imam al-Mahdi after his birth and before his occultation. We have mentioned them, and if we wanted to investigate further, the discussion would have been lengthy.

Important Questions about Imam Mahdi

The belief that Imam al-Mahdi has been alive and sustained since his birth in 255 AH until now, and that he is in occultation and will reappear by the command of Allah, has raised questions about his life and Imamate. The main questions are as follows:

1. How can he be an Imam while being in occultation, and what is the expected benefit from his occultation?
2. Why did he go into occultation?
3. How can a person live for such a long period?
4. What are the signs and indications of his reappearance?

¹⁸⁶ Sheikh al-Tusi: Al-Ghaybah 148, Kashf al-Ghummah 3:289 from al-Kharaij, and other sources.

These questions have been raised about Imam al-Mahdi since his occultation, and the longer his occultation lasted, the more focus intensified on these questions. Researchers among the scholars of Imamiyyah have answered them in independent works that cannot be fully conveyed here. However, referring to what has been cautioned about is not devoid of risks, so we will provide a general overview and refer those who seek more detailed explanations to the authoritative sources in this field.

How can he be an Imam while being in occultation, and what is its benefit?

Leadership, guidance, and performing the functions of Imamate are the ultimate purpose of appointing or choosing an Imam, and it depends on him being visibly present among the people, observing them. So how can he be an Imam and a leader while being in occultation and absent from them?

The answer has two sides, negation and affirmation.

As for negation, focusing on this question reflects a lack of understanding of Allah's chosen friends (awliya) who are among the people, as they are between the apparent, functioning aspects and the hidden, functioning aspects without people knowing them.

The book of Allah, the Mighty, acquaints us with the existence of two types of leaders, guides, and guardians for the nation: a hidden and concealed guardian whom even the Prophet of his time does not know, as indicated by Allah's words about the companion of Moses (peace be upon him): *"And they found a servant from among Our servants to whom We had given mercy from Us and had taught him from Us a [certain] knowledge. Moses said to him, 'May I follow you on [the condition] that you teach me from what you have been taught of sound judgment?'" [18:65-66]*

This verse from Surah Al-Kahf provides evidence that a guardian may be absent, yet he does not live in negligence towards his nation. Rather, he acts in its best interests and oversees its affairs without the people of the nation recognizing him.

Based on the guidance of the Noble Quran, we can say that a guardian is either a present and visible leader whom the nation knows and follows, or he is an unseen and concealed

guardian. Imam Ali ibn Abi Talib alludes to this in his conversation with Kumayl ibn Ziyad al-Nakha'i. Kumayl narrates: "Amir al-Mu'minin Ali ibn Abi Talib (peace be upon him) took my hand and led me to the cemetery. When we reached there, he exhaled and took a deep breath. Then, he said, 'O Allah, do not leave the Earth devoid of a representative of Allah as a Proof, be he either manifest and well-known or fearing and concealed, lest the proofs and pleas of Allah become nullified.'" ¹⁸⁷

The absence of Imam al-Mahdi is not an innovation in the history of the awliya', just as Moses son of Imran (peace be upon him) was absent from his people for nearly forty days, despite being a Prophet and a guardian. Allah says: *"And We made an appointment with Moses for thirty nights and perfected them by [the addition of] ten; so the term of his Lord was completed as forty nights. And Moses said to his brother Aaron, 'Take my place among my people, do right [by them], and do not follow the way of the corrupters.'" [7:142]*

Similarly, Jonah, who was one of the Prophets of Allah (peace be upon him), was in occultation in darkness. Allah says: *"And [mention] the man of the fish when he went off in anger and thought that We would not decree [anything] upon him. And he called out within the darkness, 'There is no deity except You; exalted are You. Indeed, I have been of the wrongdoers.' So We responded to him and saved him from the distress. And thus do We save the believers." [21:87-88]*

Weren't Musa and Yunus among the Prophets of Allah? What benefit is there in having a Prophet who is absent from the sight and lives far away from his people?

The answer to this case is the same answer to the case of Imam al-Mahdi (peace be upon him). In the answer to the following question, you will be provided with what benefits you can derive from the existence of the hidden Imam during his occultation.

As for the affirmation, it can be approached from the following perspectives:

Firstly, our lack of knowledge regarding the benefit of the Imam's existence during his occultation does not indicate that he is not beneficial during that time. The questioner assumes that lack of knowledge is a means to acquire knowledge through it's lack! This has parallels in

¹⁸⁷ Nahj al-Balagha bi ta'liqat Abduh, Vol. 4, p. 37, Qisar al-Hikm, Number 147.

Islamic legislation, where the simple-minded perceive the absence of knowledge as equivalent to possessing knowledge. This represents a great ignorance in the analysis of scholarly matters. Undoubtedly, human minds do not comprehend many important aspects of creation and legislation. They fail to grasp the wisdom behind many of its laws. However, Allah, in His actions, is free from any frivolity or illogicality.

Therefore, it is incumbent upon us to submit to the legislation when it reaches us in an authentic form, as affirmed by the consistency of narrations regarding his occultation.

Secondly, occultation does not imply inaction or the inability to benefit from the Imam's presence. This can be illustrated by the example of Moses' companion, who was a wali and the greatest Prophet of God of his time came to him. The companion breached the boat that belonged to the oppressed in order to protect it from the unjust ruler. The owners of the boat were unaware of his action, otherwise they would have prevented him from breaching it out of ignorance of his true intentions. Similarly, he repaired a wall to protect the treasure of two orphans. Therefore, what prevents the absent Imam from engaging in similar actions on a daily basis? Additionally, narrations indicate that he attends the pilgrimage season, performs Hajj, accompanies people, attends gatherings, assists the needy, cures the sick, and even personally fulfills their needs, although people are unaware of him.

Thirdly, the concept of the Muslim is that people in general cannot reach him during his occultation. However, the inability of the elites to reach him is not a given. Narrations indicate otherwise. The righteous individuals from the Ummah, whom the clouds follow, have the honor of meeting him and benefiting from the light of his existence. Consequently, the nation benefits through them.

Fourthly, the Imam is not obligated to personally manage external matters. Instead, he appoints others to handle these affairs, as demonstrated by the actions of Imam Mahdi (may our souls be sacrificed for him) during his occultation. In the Minor Occultation, he had four deputies who attended to the needs of the people, and the connection between the Imam and the people remained intact through them. In the Major Occultation, the jurists and knowledgeable scholars assume responsibility for issuing judgments, conducting policies, implementing punishments, and serving as authorities for the people. They safeguard the integrity of the

religion against distortion, clarify the laws, refute doubts, and handle all matters that pertain to people's affairs.¹⁸⁸

And with regards to these answers, Imam Al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) indicated in his final signature to some of his deputies, saying: "As for the way to benefit from me during my occultation, it is like benefiting from the sun when it is hidden from sight by clouds".¹⁸⁹

Why did Al-Mahdi disappear?

The appearance of the Imam among the people brings benefits that are not present during the period of his occultation. So why did he disappear from the people, depriving them of benefiting from his presence? What is the interest that kept him hidden from people's eyes?

The answer:

This question can be answered through negation and affirmation:

As for negation, based on what we mentioned in the answer to the first question, the limitation of our minds in comprehending the reasons for his occultation does not lead us to deny the consistent narrations. Recognizing the limitation of our understanding takes precedence over refuting the widely transmitted narrations; in fact, it is necessary.

As for affirmation, the reasons for his occultation are clear to those who ponder over the narrations about them. Imam Al-Mahdi (peace be upon him) is the last of the twelve Imams promised by the Messenger, entrusted with the honor of Islam. It is well known that the Islamic governments did not appreciate them; on the contrary, they were vigilant and imprisoned them, shedding their pure blood with the sword or poison. If he had appeared openly, they would have

¹⁸⁸ The term "minor occultation" refers to the period of his occultation - peace be upon him - starting from the year 260 AH after the death of his father until the year 329 AH. During this time, the connection between him and the people was maintained through his four deputies: Sheikh Abu Amr Uthman bin Sa'id al-'Amri, his son Sheikh Abu Ja'far Muhammad bin Uthman, Sheikh Abu al-Qasim al-Husayn bin Ruh from the Banu Nubakht tribe, and Sheikh Abu al-Hasan Ali bin Muhammad al-Samri.

The term "major occultation" refers to his occultation from that year until our present time. During this period, the special deputation through specific individuals ceased, and it was replaced by general representation through jurists and learned scholars. This is stated in his noble signature: "As for general matters, refer to the narrators of our traditions, for they are my authority over you, and I am Allah's authority over them" (Kamal al-Din, Chapter 45, p. 484).

¹⁸⁹ Al-Saduq: Kamal al-Din, Chapter 45, p. 485, Hadith 4. The scholar Al-Majlisi mentioned the various aspects of this analogy in his book "Bihar al-Anwar," Volume 52, Chapter 20, pp. 93-94.

killed him to extinguish his light. Therefore, it was in the interest for him to remain hidden from people's eyes, seeing them while they do not know him, until the will of Allah is fulfilled, and he appears after a special preparation in the world to accept him and submit to his obedience. Thus, Allah Almighty fulfills through him what He has promised to all nations in terms of inheriting the earth for the oppressed.

Some narrations allude to this point. Zurarah reported: I heard Abu Ja'far (Al-Baqir, peace be upon him) saying, "Indeed, Al-Qa'im will have an occultation before his uprising." I said, "Why?" He replied, "He fears." Zurarah said, "Meaning, [he fears being] killed." In another narration, it is mentioned, "He fears being slaughtered."¹⁹⁰

You will be informed of what suffices you when talking about its signs.

Imam Mahdi and his lifespan

One of the questions raised about Imam Mahdi is regarding his lifespan during his occultation. He was born in the year 255 AH, which means his age until the present era is over one thousand and one hundred and fifty years. Is it logically possible for a person to live such a long lifespan according to scientific reasoning?

The answer:

There are two aspects, negation and affirmation.

Regarding negation: The wise scripture indicates that the oldest of the prophets lived for nearly one thousand years. Allah says: *"And he remained among them a thousand years, minus fifty years."* [29:14]

The Torah also included the names of many long-lived individuals and mentioned their conditions in the Book of Genesis.¹⁹¹

¹⁹⁰ Refer to Kamal al-Din, Chapter 44, p. 281, Hadith 8, 9, and 10.

¹⁹¹ The Torah, Book of Genesis, Chapter 5, Verse 5. It mentions the ages of Adam, Seth, Noah, and others.

Muslims have compiled books about long-lived individuals, such as "Al-Mu'ammareen" by Abu Hatim Al-Sajistani. Al-Saduq also mentioned several names of long-lived individuals in his book "Kamal Al-Din."¹⁹²

The scholar Al-Karajaki wrote a special treatise titled "Al-Burhan 'ala sihhati Tul 'umri al-Imam Sahib al-Zaman".¹⁹³ Allamah Al-Majlisi also mentioned it in Al-Bihar,¹⁹⁴ and others.

Regarding affirmation: The question about the possibility of a long lifespan expresses a lack of recognition of the vast capability of Allah. *"And they have not appraised Allah with true appraisal."* [6:91] If his life, his occultation, and all his affairs are under the care of Allah, then there is no problem in Allah extending his lifespan as He wills, protecting him from illness, and granting him a prosperous life.

In other words: A long life is either possible in itself or impossible, and no one has claimed the latter, so the former is plausible. Therefore, there is no objection to Allah extending the lifespan of His chosen ones to achieve a purpose of legislation. In addition to what has been established in the science of life, it is possible for human life to be prolonged if health preservation rules are observed. And that the death of a person at a young age is not due to insufficient provision, but rather due to factors that prevent the continuation of life. If it were possible to protect humans from these factors through medications and specific treatments, their lifespan would be extended as desired.

Furthermore, there are additional words from the gem of medical science regarding the possibility of prolonging life and extending the lifespan of humans, published in various books and scientific journals.¹⁹⁵

In summary, medical professionals agree that taking care of the principles of health preservation leads to a longer lifespan. The more attention is given to the care of these principles, the longer the lifespan. That is why we observe that deaths in some kingdoms in this era are

¹⁹² Kamal al-Din, p. 555.

¹⁹³ Al-Karajaki: Al-Burhan 'ala sihhati Tul 'umri al-Imam Sahib al-Zaman, an appendix to "Kanz al-Fawaid," also in Volume 2. Note the mention of long-lived individuals on pages 114-155, published by Dar al-Adwa, Beirut, 1405 AH.

¹⁹⁴ Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 51, Chapter 14, pages 225-293.

¹⁹⁵ Refer to the magazine "Al-Muqtataf," Part Three of the Fifty-Ninth Year.

fewer than before, and the elderly population is greater than ever before. It is all due to the preservation of health principles. Hence, companies have been established to ensure human life for a known duration under specific regulations and limits, governed by health preservation laws. If all aspects of health requirements were enforced in a person's life, their lifespan would be extended according to Allah's will.

If you read what doctors write in this field, you will understand the meaning of Allah's saying: *"And had he not been of those who exalt Allāh, he would have remained inside its belly until the Day they are resurrected."* [37:143-144]

So if a person's life can exist within the bellies of whales in the depths of the oceans until the Day of Resurrection, then how can a human not live on land, in natural surroundings, under the care and protection of Allah, for as long as Allah wills?

What are the signs of his (peace be upon him) appearance?

If the hidden Imam has an appearance after a long occultation, then there must be signs and indications that inform about his appearance. So what are these signs?

Answer:

The events and trials that occur at the end of time, as mentioned in the books of hadith, can be divided into two categories:

One category includes signs of the Hour and indications of the approach of the Day of Judgment. The other category includes what happens before the appearance of the awaited Mahdi. There may be confusion between the two categories in the books. We will mention the second category, which consists of several matters, including:

1. The call in the sky.
2. Eclipses occurring in unusual locations.
3. Discord and hypocrisy in society.
4. The spread of injustice, oppression, turmoil, and chaos in the nation.

5. The affliction of human beings with red and white death.
6. The killing of innocent souls.
7. The emergence of the Dajjal.
8. The emergence of Sufyani.

And other matters mentioned in Islamic narrations.¹⁹⁶

These are the signs of his appearance, but there are matters that pave the way for his emergence and facilitate the achievement of his goals. We point out the most prominent of them:

1. Global readiness: By this, we mean that the human society, due to the prevalence of corruption, reaches a point where it despairs of achieving reform by human hands and through global organizations with different titles. The pressure of oppression and injustice on humans leads them to surrender and acknowledge that reform can only be achieved through the manifestation of divine miracles and the presence of an unseen force that destroys all those corrupt human entities that have enslaved humanity.

2. Integration of minds: The global government of Imam Mahdi (peace be upon him) is not achieved through wars, fires, and the total destruction of enemies, but rather through people's desire for it and their support of it, for the integration of their minds and knowledge.

Imam Al-Baqir (peace be upon him) said in a narration where he guides to the fact that if that circumstance arises, the minds of humans will come together and their dreams will be fulfilled. When our Qa'im rises, Allah will place His hand on the heads of His servants, gathering their minds, completing their dreams.¹⁹⁷

And his saying –peace be upon him: ‘gathering their minds’, meaning that social integration reaches the extent that accepts that divine talent, and there will be no room for revolution against the Imam, or overthrowing him, or killing him or imprisoning him.

¹⁹⁶ Refer to Bihar al-Anwar, Vol. 52, Chapter 25, pages 181-308. Kitab al-Mahdi by Sayyid Sadr al-Din al-Sadr (1373 AH). Also, refer to Montakhab al-Athar, pages 424-462.

¹⁹⁷ Muntakhab al-Athar, p. 483.

3. Industrial integration: The unified global government can only be achieved through the integration of human industries, so that the whole world hears its voice and call, and its teachings and laws in one day and one time.

Imam Al-Sadiq - peace be upon him - said: "The believer in the time of the Qa'im, while he is in the east, sees his brother in the west, and likewise the one in the west sees his brother in the east."¹⁹⁸

4. The World Revolutionary Army: The government of Imam Mahdi - peace be upon him - is based on the integration of minds, but the government is not without a revolutionary and effective guerrilla army that paves the way for the Imam - peace be upon him - and accompanies him after his appearance to achieve his goals and objectives.



And our final supplication is: Praise be to Allah, the Lord of the worlds



¹⁹⁸ Muntakhab al-Athar, p. 483.